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COUPLE PLEADS NOT GUILTY IN BABY DEATH, PG 4

Sports pg 17

Halladay dealt to Philly: Report



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HRM crime rate down slightly

SAFETY Overall crime is down slightly in HRM, while violent crime is up slightly, according to figures released yesterday.

The HRM Partners in Policing issued its third quarter crime statistics and it shows overall crime is down .61 per cent when comparing the first nine months of 2008 to 2009.

But violent crime is up .52 per cent, including one more murder (eight), eight more attempted murders (20) and 29 more assaults (2,532).

There were also 47 more break and enters and 456 more thefts over $5,000.

On the plus side, vehicle thefts are down 27 per cent, from 641 to 470, and there were 102 fewer frauds.

Also down significantly were crimes involving prostitution (38 per cent), weapons related offences (14 per cent) and drugs (8.4 per cent). METRO HALIFAX



ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Family, friends, search personnel and his dog Chance look on as seven-year-old James Delorey's casket is taken from Holy Redeemer Catholic Church yesterday in Whitney Pier, near Sydney. The child had wandered from his home following his dog and spent two nights lost in the woods. Delorey died later in a Halifax hospital.

Delorey laid to rest

Community mourns autistic boy who brought them together

James Delorey's dog hung its head outside the window of a hearse at the boy's funeral service yesterday, a moment that symbolized the loyalty the faithful family pet displayed for the seven-year-old boy.

Chance sat in the front passenger seat as the funeral procession arrived at a church in Cape Breton, where hundreds gathered to mourn a boy who captured hearts across the country.

James got lost after following Chance — a mixed-breed — into the woods near his home in South Bar, outside Sydney.

Chance returned two days later and searchers found James unconscious, curled up under a thick stand of spruce, after they traced the dog's paw prints in the snow.

Hopes that James would survive were dashed a day later after he died in hospital of hypothermia.

During his sermon yesterday, Rev. Errol MacDonald said while the fervent hope that James would recover did not come to pass, the frantic efforts to find him brought people together.

> **"In the past week, everyone stopped. And in that stopping they found the true meaning of Christmas — that a child would give us hope."**
> Rev. Errol MacDonald

"This is the busiest time of the year. Everyone is caught up with their own agendas," the priest said, standing before a casket draped in white.

"Yet in the past week, everyone stopped. And in that stopping they found the true meaning of Christmas — that a child would give us hope."

MacDonald also expressed hope during the service that the tragedy might create a broader understanding of autism.

The search for James was made more difficult because he was autistic and couldn't speak.

Many of the police, paramedics and ground searchers who helped look for the boy formed an honour guard outside Holy Redeemer Church after the service and some placed spruce cuttings on top of the casket after it was carried out.

The service included a choir singing Christmas carols.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Smoke sales rise despite higher cost

PAUL MCLEOD
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HEALTH Cigarettes have defied the laws of economics in Nova Scotia as sales have spiked despite rising prices.

From April through September of this year, 480 million tobacco units — a "unit" being a cigarette, cigar or gram of uncut tobacco — were sold in the province. That's up 44 million units from the same period the previous year.

The new numbers were released yesterday during the province's economic update. In just 11 weeks since the budget was passed, the province had to up its tobacco revenue projections by $12.4 million.

Price hike

- Sales were up despite the government increasing tobacco taxes in June by five cents per smoke, or $1.25 a pack.

"It certainly surprised everyone," said Finance Minister Graham Steele.

"Now, I'm not prepared to say there's been a rise in consumption. We have no information on that one way or another."

Steele said it's impossible to know whether consumption has risen or fallen because no one knows the scope of the illegal tobacco trade in the province.

He said one theory is that a drop-off in illegal tobacco supply has caused people to shift to buying legal products. But he said it's impossible to confirm whether or not that's true.

News on the Move

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Local



McBride tickets going on sale

Another major country music star is coming to Halifax in 2010. Gillett Entertainment Group announced yesterday Martina McBride, left, will be performing at the Halifax Metro Centre on March 17 at 7:30 p.m. Opening for McBride will be Gord Bamford. Tickets cost between $49.50 and $69.50, plus service charges, and go on sale Saturday at 10 a.m. Tickets are available at all Ticket Atlantic outlets, online at ticketatlantic.com or by phone at 451-1221. METRO HALIFAX

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

Parking ban nets $10K for HRM

PHILIP CROUCHER
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TICKETS The Halifax Regional Municipality raked in the cash on the first night of its overnight winter parking ban — about $10,000, to be precise.

Halifax Regional Police spokesman Const. Brian Palmeter said yesterday they estimate about 200 tickets were issued on the first night of the overnight parking ban, which went into effect early yesterday and includes Halifax, Timberlea, Bedford, Dartmouth, Sackville, Cole Harbour, Fall River, Beaver Bank, Westphal and Eastern Passage.

Under the ban, a ticket of $50 can be issued to anyone parking on the street between 1 and 7 a.m. If the fine isn't paid within 60 days, it goes up to $82.96.

In the event of a major snowstorm, HRM can ticket or tow any vehicle that interferes with snow-clearing operations, regardless of time or date.

Residents are being asked to allow 12 hours after the end of the snowfall for crews to plow main roads and bus routes, and 24 hours for residential and rural streets.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Police and search crew members attend the funeral of a Nova Scotia boy who died after getting lost in the woods at **metronews.ca/canada**

Your Money Allan Small offers a look at what 2010 may hold for investors at **metronews.ca/investing**



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Grand Parade **Menorah lighting**



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Howard Conter, president of the Atlantic Jewish Council, and Rabbi Mendel Feldman from the Chabad Lubavitch of the Maritimes light the menorah at Grand Parade last night. Hanukkah began on Dec. 12 and continues through Dec. 19.

Martial arts fighter's death ruled murder

No suspects, motive in shooting death: Cop

ALY THOMSON
for Metro Halifax

Police have confirmed the death of 44-year-old Timothy John Kelly is a homicide.

Halifax Regional Police spokesman Const. Brian Palmeter said an autopsy completed yesterday revealed Kelly was gunned down.

On Saturday, police were called to 7051 Abbott St. near the Halifax Shopping Centre shortly after 10 p.m. Police say Kelly was found lying on the ground suffering from multiple wounds, reportedly on the sidewalk in front of the home.

He was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Palmeter said there are no suspects and no motive for the shooting. He also confirmed Kelly is known to police.

What appears to be a bullet hole could be seen through the side door of the festively decorated home on Sunday, but it wasn't known if it was related to the incident, police say.



Timothy John Kelly

"We have no witness to the incident right now, so we can't confirm that this is new damage and is related to the incident," Palmeter told Metro on Sunday.

Spots of what looked like blood could also be seen leading towards the home.

Kelly, a mixed martial artist, trained at Team Titans Halifax and had a record of 2-5-0, according to sherdog.com.

Kelly last competed at Extreme Cage Combat 10 in late September at the Halifax Forum, where he won a majority decision over Corey Boone, according to eccmma.com

"We all loved him ... he was a good man."
Terrance, Sackville Fine Cars manager

Kelly worked as a used-car salesman at Sackville Fine Cars on Sackville Drive. A manager of the dealership yesterday, who would only go by the first name Terrance, said Kelly was a "close friend."

"We all loved him … he was a good man," he said, speaking for everyone at the dealership.

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Jailed man charged in summer shooting

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Halifax Regional Police believe they've found the man behind a Spring Garden Road shooting in broad daylight this past summer and, conveniently, he's already behind bars.

Police said yesterday they were charging a 22-year-old man with attempted murder and several weapons charges. The accused is currently imprisoned at the federal Springhill Penitentiary on other matters.

The incident happened on the afternoon of July 20 on Spring Garden Road near the intersection of Robie Street. Witnesses told Metro that they saw a man in his 20s pull out a gun and shoot at two other people.

There were no reports of anyone suffering injuries.

Police spokesman Const. Brian Palmeter said yesterday he didn't know what matter landed the man in jail or whether it occurred before or after the Spring Garden Road shooting.

Police can't yet release the man's name because the information has not been sworn in court. The man was notified late Friday that he was being charged but he may not see a courtroom for some time.

By the time the paperwork to transfer him from Springhill goes through, it will probably be January, Palmeter conceded.

"I would guess probably next year. I would be very surprised if they had him in court this year," Palmeter said.

"He's not going anywhere."

If the man were to be found guilty, it would be up to the judge to decide whether the sentence would run concurrently or consecutively to the jail time that is now being served.

Fire at Hantsport paperboard plant interrupts production

MANUFACTURING A stubborn fire has affected production at Minas Basin Pulp and Power in Hantsport.

The day shift was sent home yesterday because of the fire in a paper-storage area.

Hantsport fire Chief Paul Maynard said that they were called to the paperboard manufacturer just before 4 a.m.

He said the main blaze was knocked down fairly quickly, but fire in a large number of paper bales was more stubborn.

One employee was treated for minor smoke inhalation.

The cause of the fire has yet to be determined.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Spring Garden Area's Quick Facts

spring garden

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Police investigating crash involving pedestrian in Dartmouth

A pedestrian was struck by a vehicle at the corner of Breeze and Belvedere Drive in Dartmouth late Sunday. Police say the incident took place at 5:38 p.m. and the pedestrian was transported to the QEII Health Sciences Centre with non-life-threatening injuries. Police are continuing to investigate. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Body found in Sydney apartment identified

DEATH Cape Breton Regional Police have identified a man whose body was found in a Sydney apartment Saturday as 31-year-old Ron Boutilier of Glace Bay.

Police responded to a 911 call at 3:45 p.m. saying there was a deceased man inside an apartment at 87 Brookland St. in Sydney, according to a release yesterday.

The body was transported to Halifax on Sunday for an autopsy. The medical examiner's office has determined there was no foul play but is awaiting further tests to determine the cause of death, the Cape Breton Regional Police said.

Major crime and forensic identification units are continuing to help determine the cause of death, police said.

Police had been treating the death as suspicious. The man was staying at the apartment with a friend, police have said.

CAPE BRETON POST

Couple pleads not guilty

Trial date to be set for parents charged after baby's death

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The young Halifax couple accused of seriously injuring their newborn baby pleaded not guilty to charges in a Halifax provincial courtroom yesterday.

After an endless string of legal delays, Ashiqur Rahman and Jane Gomes, both 23, entered their pleas and were ordered to return to court on Dec. 22 to set a date for trial.

Gomes had also been scheduled for a bail hearing, but it was put off until her next appearance.

The couple, originally from Bangladesh and staying in Canada on student visas, sat nearly motionless on the defendant's bench and displayed little outward emotion during their brief, joint appearance.

Both were arrested and charged with aggravated assault after their seven-week-old baby girl, Aurora Breakthrough, died on July 27. The child had been admitted to the IWK Health Centre four days earlier after her parents called 911 from their apartment on Gottingen Street to report that she had been seriously injured.

According to Crown prosecutor Denise Smith, a medical examiner's report on the cause of death is expected soon, and it is likely the charges against Rahman and Gomes could be upgraded depending on the results. Smith said if the charges do change, the couple will be tried separately.

Since the case first came before the courts, defence lawyers have repeatedly asked for more time to look over the evidence — resulting in six separate court dates since July.

For now, both Rahman and Gomes will remain in custody at the Burnside jail, where they are forbidden from having any contact with each other.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Jane Gomes and her partner Ashiqur Rahman (inset) leave the courtroom at Halifax provincial court yesterday. Both have pleaded not guilty to aggravated assault in the death of their seven-week-old daughter Aurora Breakthrough in July.

Pedestrians hit minutes apart at nearby blocks

INJURIES Two pedestrians were struck by vehicles within blocks and minutes of each other yesterday morning in Halifax.

Police say just after 7 a.m., a 78-year-old male driver of a van struck a 39-year-old man walking in a crosswalk at the corner of Almon and Agricola streets. The victim was taken to hospital with what are believed to be non-life-threatening injuries. The driver was charged for failing to yield to a pedestrian.

About 20 minutes later, a 54-year-old man was struck while crossing the street mid-block by the driver of a car on the 6200 block of Almon Street. The pedestrian was taken to hospital as a precaution and has been charged with failing to yield to a vehicle. METRO HALIFAX

Parvo virus infecting dogs in Truro area

PETS A vet says a potentially fatal virus affecting mostly puppies and elderly dogs is in the Truro area.

Melissa Aucoin, a vet at the Truro Veterinary Hospital, says a "cluster" of parvo virus cases has been seen in Truro. She said about 20 cases have come to that one vet hospital alone in the last year, the most recent one about a week ago.

The virus attacks the intestine and bone marrow of dogs so that the affected animal can't absorb nutrients and fluids. Early symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, a lack of appetite, very lethargic, severe dehydration and bloody stool. It can be fatal if pet owners leave it too long. We've had people try to treat their dog at home and it was fatal," said Aucoin.

Diagnosis is easy and done through a fecal sample. If an advanced case arrives at the vet, the animal could be in hospital for up to five days.

The financial cost is great as well, said Aucoin. "It can be (at least) $1,800, due to bloodwork, the dog's stay in intensive care, needing IV fluids and medication. But they can do well if properly treated," she said.

Aucoin said puppies and elderly dogs are most at risk if not vaccinated.

"Vaccinations are 100 per cent effective," said Aucoin. TRURO DAILY NEWS

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'Operation Christmas' checking that drivers drive nice

Halifax RCMP will be conducting "Operation Christmas" checkpoints throughout December. Police will be handing out information pamphlets on road safety and impaired driving from alcohol and drugs. A checkpoint was held yesterday on Sackville Drive from 5 to 6 p.m. METRO HALIFAX

Man's wife upset no charges laid against RCMP

The common-law wife of a man shot by an RCMP officer on a Cape Breton native reserve said yesterday she's "shocked" to learn no charges will be laid in the man's death following an investigation by another police force.

John Simon died after he was shot by an RCMP officer at a home on the Wagmatcook First Nation reserve on Dec. 2, 2008.

His family and police have both stated Simon was drunk and suicidal at the time of the shooting, but family members argue police didn't need to enter the residence — and add they distrust the investigation that followed.

However, RCMP said at a news conference in Wagmatcook yesterday that a probe by the Halifax police determined the officer who fired the gun did so in self-defence.

RCMP Chief Supt. Blair McKnight said the RCMP regretted Simon's death but added, "while tragic, it was an event that involved a person who was under the influence of alcohol, with access to firearms and experiencing emotional distress." He said the RCMP promised to review its policies on entering buildings in suicide cases.

Gary Richard, the lawyer for the band, said that police had informed the family that Simon had been unarmed and sitting on the toilet when the officer first entered the house. Richard said police also told the family that Simon had moved from the toilet area to the kitchen where he held a shotgun. However, Richard said the family and the band can't understand why the officer felt it necessary to enter the house on his own. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Discussions on to save historical building

PLAN Talks are underway to save the former office of Halifax's first chief surveyor, Charles Morris, from the wrecking ball.

According to a release issued yesterday by the Ecology Action Centre, the plan is to relocate the 19th century apartment building that sits on the corner of Hollis and Morris streets to the Nova Scotia Power parking lot adjacent the site by uprooting the structure by lifting it from its foundation.

But NSP spokesman David Rodenhiser said "the Ecology Action Centre overstated the state of discussions" in the release.

"We are collaborating to work out the details … but right now those negotiations aren't done," Rodenhiser said.

Thom Oommen, a researcher with the Ecology Action Centre, said things are moving fast and they are working under the impression they will be able to move the structure to the empty lot.

In late September, Halifax Regional Council gave the nod of approval to Dexel Developments to build a 10-storey commercial and residential building in its place.

A second building, the Rhuland House at 1267 Hollis St., may also be moved, but it is unknown at this point whether both buildings will be saved, Oommen said.

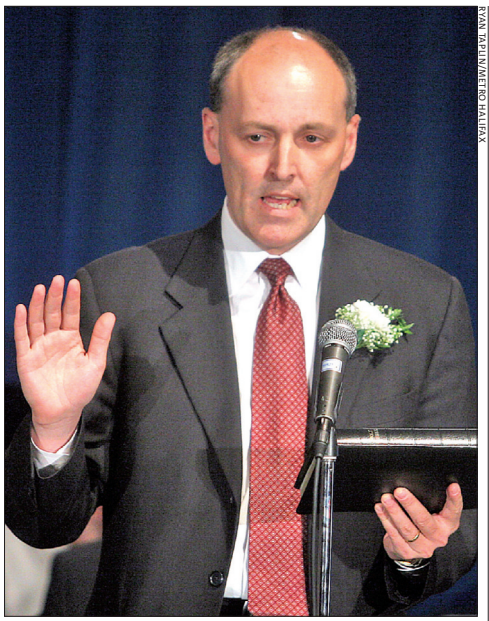
ALY THOMSON/ FOR METRO HALIFAX

News in brief

GUILTY A 68-year-old Port Philip man will return for sentencing in May after entering a guilty plea to one count each of indecent assault, illiciting sexual intercourse and sexual intercourse with someone younger than 14. A publication ban is in place to protect the identity of the man and the victim. The events occurred between 1976 and 1983 in Springhill and Athol.

AMHERST DAILY NEWS

Sean Paul to rock the Metro Centre
Sean Paul will be performing at the Halifax Metro Centre on Tuesday, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m. The Grammy Award winning artists is touring with Karl Wolf, Bad News Brown and DJ Groove. Tickets are $44.50, plus service charges, and go on sale Friday at 9 a.m. through Ticket Atlantic. METRO HALIFAX


RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Nova Scotia Finance Minister Graham Steele, shown in this file photo, announced yesterday that the provincial deficit for 2009-10 is projected at $525.2 million, $66.9 million less than estimated in its October budget.

Fiscal update shows smaller projected deficit

PAUL MCLEOD
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We're still broke, but we're a little less broke.

A fiscal update yesterday revealed this year's projected provincial deficit has shrunk by $67 million since September.

That said, the deficit is still $525 million and we'll be adding over a billion dollars to the debt all told.

On the positive side, new federal data has been very kind to Nova Scotia as it now expects an extra $50 million in income tax.

On the negative side, unemployment is growing faster than predicted and could jump to 9.1 per cent by years end. Another problem for the government is some departments spending over budget.

Department expenses are up $15,6 million in total. About half of that can be recouped from federal sources but there's still a $7.8 million shortfall. Health care wages, law court backups, increased highway work and bad debts are among the factors driving up costs.

Finance Minister Graham Steele said his department will be taking a hard line on the issue and he expects departments to be back in the black by the end of the fiscal year.

"We've said to (the departments), wait a minute now, we're not just going to accept that without further explanation. Unless there's a very good explanation forthcoming we expect you to find that money somewhere else," Steele told reporters.

"I think it's important to send a message to the civil service if you're going to go over your budget there's got to be a good explanation."
Finance Minister Graham Steele

"I think it's important to send a message to the civil service if you're going to go over your budget there's got to be a good explanation."

The books were buoyed by gas tax revenue from increased driving (3.1 million), petroleum royalties ($2.3 million), vehicle registration fees ($3.6 million) and a large increase in tobacco tax ($12.4 million).

The province's gross domestic product is still expected to grow this year, but by only 0.2 per cent rather than the budget estimate of 0.3 per cent.

ShareYourViews
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NDP mulls changing minor-injury insurance cap

PAUL MCLEOD
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The NDP wants to change Nova Scotia's insurance cap on so-called "minor" injuries suffered in car accidents.

The government plans to introduce legislation this spring to change the $2,500 cap on soft tissue injuries.

"Our government is not persuaded that the current minor injury cap is fair," Finance Minister Graham Steele said yesterday.

"We believe (the cap) needs to change, but exactly how it should change in order to rebalance fairness and affordability, that's the whole purpose of the consultations."
Finance Minister Graham Steele

"We believe it needs to change, but exactly how it should change in order to rebalance fairness and affordability, that's the whole purpose of the consultation."

Steele said government staff is already working on the issue and a discussion paper should be released within days. He said there are still questions about how raising the cap would affect insurance rates as well as questions about retroactivity.

"We can change the rules from now forward, that's easy," he said. "But deciding how it's going to apply to people in the cap period from 2003 to now without unduly effecting the affordability of insurance rates, that's one of the key questions."

The NDP had formerly been advocates of creating a public insurance option. But Steele said that was during the crisis of rising insurance rates and since rates have stabilized the government is not looking at enacting public insurance.

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Accident sends teen to hospital

A 13-year-old girl was transported to hospital early yesterday morning in Amherst following a vehicle-pedestrian accident near Steamboats on Highway 6. Const. Dal Hutchinson of the Cumberland RCMP said police were called to the accident at about 7:40 a.m. AMHERST DAILY NEWS

Feds announce $700K for HRM rec facilities

MONIQUE MUISE
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Several recreational facilities in the Halifax Regional Municipality will soon be getting a much-needed facelift.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay was in Halifax yesterday morning to announce $710,000 in federal funding for upgrades to a popular downtown rugby field, the Bedford Lion's Club pool, and 21 basketball, tennis and ball hockey courts throughout the municipality.

"I think this is one of the most important investments we can make as a country, and as a province," MacKay said.

The federal money will be coming out of the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program (RInc), part of the Tories' broader economic stimulus plan. HRM will contribute approximately $1.2 million to the upgrades.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Defence Minister Peter MacKay is seen on a video camera screen as he answers questions following a press conference at the Public Gardens yesterday. MacKay announced funding for improvements to several recreational facilities in the HRM.

Several members of the Halifax Wanderers rugby club were on hand for MacKay's announcement, and pledged to contribute $200,000 toward a major overhaul of the existing canteen on their main field — which will be completely refurbished and renamed the Wanderers Grounds Field House.

"It's about longevity," said Chapman Swaine, 26, captain of the Wanderers senior men's team. "This money will give us an excellent place to develop the game within the city and the province, and really put (rugby) on the map so kids are seeing it and realizing that it's a viable and exciting sport."

Yesterday's announcement came as a kind of consolation prize for the municipality, which was with a bill for several million dollars when the feds backed out of the new four-pad hockey arena project in Hammonds Plains. Despite that disappointment, Mayor Peter Kelly said he's happy to see any new federal cash streaming into HRM's coffers.

"If there are still any unused dollars, we're more than open to finding a spot where we can allocate them," Kelly said. "We have other sports fields that we're looking at, and we have projects for Citadel High's auditorium, and a Porters Lake investment in schools … so we'll take whatever we can get."

MacKay: Concerns voiced over ex-Afghan governor

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says he raised concerns with officials in the Afghanistan government about a former governor of Kandahar who has been accused of personally torturing Afghans.

MacKay rejected a suggestion yesterday Kandahar's former governor, Asadullah Khalid, could have been removed from office as early as 2006 if Canadian officials hadn't actively supported him for the next two years.

"Let's not forget, this is a sovereign country."
Defence Minister Peter MacKay

The assertion is contained in a two-year-old report by Richard Colvin, the diplomat who dropped a political bombshell on Ottawa last month when he testified that all Canadian-captured prisoners in Afghanistan were likely tortured by Afghan authorities.

Colvin's diplomatic memos on Khalid have not been made public by the Canadian government. But an uncensored version of the report was shown to The Canadian Press.

MacKay said he had not seen Colvin's report, but he insisted that he had complained about Khalid when he was Canada's foreign affairs minister.

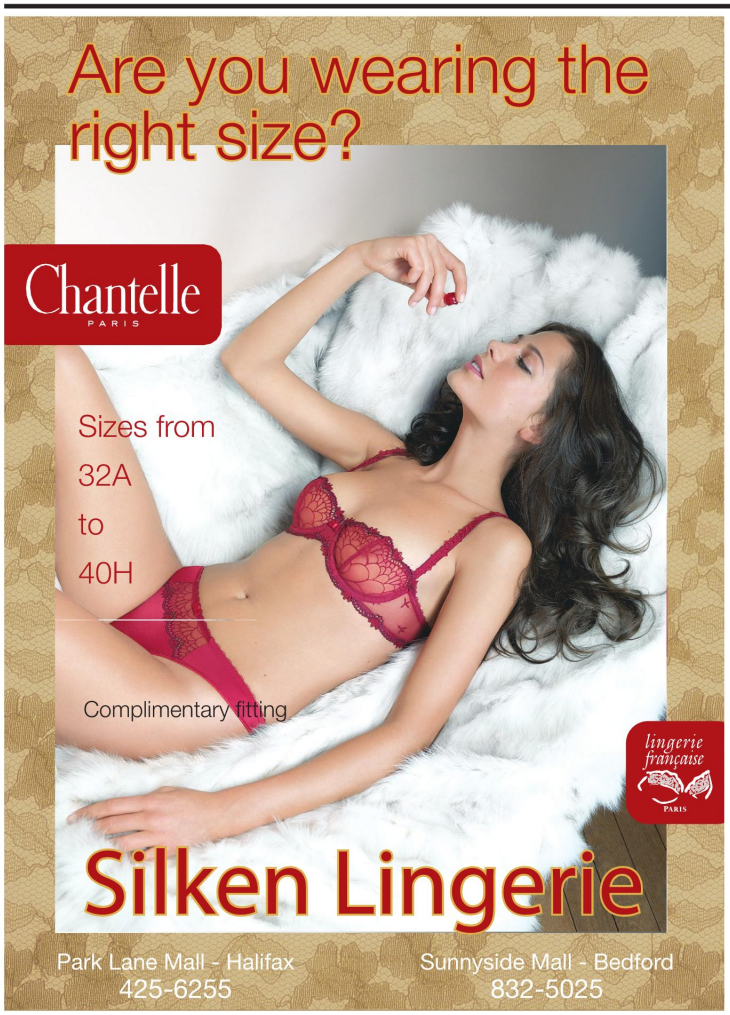
"It's something that I raised directly with him," MacKay said after a funding announcement in Halifax. "I raised it with other officials in the Afghanistan government."

The minister did not specifically say whether he asked for Khalid's removal, saying only that he had expressed his "concerns." He was foreign affairs minister from February 2006 to August 2007.

MacKay also said there was little Canada could do about Khalid.

"Let's not forget, this is a sovereign country," he said. "This is a country where the president himself makes appointments of governors. While we can express concerns … it's ultimately up to the government of Afghanistan."

THE CANADIAN PRESS







Amherst cops fear financial impact from loss of jail

FACILITY Amherst police are concerned with the potential financial impact with the loss of the Cumberland County Correctional Centre.

Chief Charles Rushton said the loss of the jail to another part of the province has the potential to add at least several thousand dollars to the department's bottom line because it will increase expenses for jail guards.

Rushton also said it's going to prevent the department from maintaining its level of service to the community and to those people who are alleged to have committed offences.

On the day Justice Minister Ross Landry announced the province is going to build one jail instead of two, Cumberland North MLA Brian Skabar said he planned to work with the minister on some sort of remand arrangement.

He hinted he would be pushing for a remand centre.

Officials with the Justice Department indicated they are aware of the situation and that it would be taken care of before the next jail, the location of which has yet to be announced, is built.

AMHERST DAILY NEWS

Police cleared in Cape Breton man's death
The RCMP says an investigation into the police shooting death of a Cape Breton man last year has found no wrongdoing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Asbestos lobby gets federal funds

Group denies boosting climate-change skepticism

Go Green

Ottawa has been funding an asbestos lobby group that promotes the work of prominent climate-change skeptics.

The revelation comes as Canada's delegation struggles to avoid being cast as the villain at the Copenhagen climate conference, and environmentalists are urging the government to stop financing the group.

On its website, the Chrysotile Institute promotes a chapter that it says debunks the asbestos health-risk hoax from the 2007 book titled Scared to Death — From BSE to Global Warming: Why Scares Are Costing Us the Earth.

But Chrysotile Institute president Clement Godbout says his organization actually has no position about the book's chapter on climate change.

He says his group is only promoting the book for outlining how the science of asbestos, and its potential health risks, have been systematically exaggerated by the "anti-asbestos lobby."

The book was written by prominent British newspaper columnist Christopher Booker and co-author Richard North.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sierra Club

- The Sierra Club of Canada now urges the government to stop funding the Chrysotile Institute, which has received more than $20 million from the federal government since 1984.

Ottawa **Wounded soldier carries the torch**



PAWEL DWULIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Andrew Knisley, 25, looks up at the Olympic torch in front of the Olympic countdown clock in Ottawa yesterday. Knisley lost his leg while serving in Afghanistan in January 2009 and was released from the hospital just two weeks ago.

News in brief

MAYOR The national director of the federal Liberal party Rocco Rossi has put his name on the ballot for the Toronto mayoralty race in October 2010.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SCANLIFE

Haiti's new prime minister arrives in Ottawa today with an unusual message: Haiti is open for business, and Canada is ready to help. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Canadian diplomat called home after allegedly spitting at cop

TANZANIA A Canadian diplomat has been called home from Tanzania after allegedly spitting at a police officer.

Tanzania's foreign minister identified Jean Touchatte, a private secretary at the Canadian High Commission, as the official involved in the Dec. 9 incident.

The Tanzanian government said Touchatte spat at the policeman during a traffic jam in the Indian Ocean city of Dar es Salaam. He was questioned by police but later released because of diplomatic immunity. Media outlets also reported that he spat at a journalist who attempted to interview him at the police station.

"We regret the incident that took place," High Commissioner Robert Orr said in a statement late Sunday.

Yesterday, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Canada's "excellent bilateral relations" with the East African country remain in tact. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Violent protests at Canadian-owned mine in Mexico expected

The death of a Mexican activist who strongly opposed the presence of a Canadian company in his hometown is predicted to spur violent protests this week, with supporters already furious over his slaying suggesting a weekend clash at another Canadian-owned mine is a sign of things to come. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Senators' flying perks top MPs'

Upper chamber OK's taxpayer-funded international flights

Senators have quietly expanded their opportunities to jet around the globe, courtesy of Canadian taxpayers.

A new policy, adopted last May, gives denizens of the upper chamber international travel privileges not enjoyed by their elected counterparts in the House of Commons.

It enabled Liberal Senator Lillian Dyck, for instance, to embark last month on a visit to her late father's ancestral home in China.

By senators' own admission, few politicians anywhere in the world are entitled to such a perk.

Details of the policy change are contained in transcripts of meetings of the Senate's bipartisan internal economy committee, which governs the upper chamber's operations. The transcripts are posted publicly on the Senate's website, but have gone largely unnoticed until now.

$1,776.53
Liberal Senator Lillian Dyck billed Canadian taxpayers $1,776.53 for her air fare to China last month.

They offer a fascinating glimpse of senators' perception of their entitlements and their awareness of the potential for a public backlash. For instance, during one meeting in October, Liberal Senator Paul Massicote railed against the fact that some senators habitually fly business class.

"I have personally asked several senators and they have told me that they travel economy when they are paying for the ticket themselves, but business class when the taxpayers are paying," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Security certificate nixed by judge

A federal judge has struck down a national security certificate against a Syrian-born man arrested eight years ago on terror suspicions.

The ruling today by Federal Court Justice Richard Mosley effectively frees Hassan Almrei.

The government had been trying to deport Almrei on a security certificate — a seldom-used provision of the immigration law for removing suspected terrorists and spies.

Almrei's lawyer, Lorne Waldman, said from Toronto his client was "very excited" over the ruling. Waldman had not yet read the full decision, and said he and Almrei would comment later.

Certificate cases

- The government has initiated just six certificate cases — four terror suspects, a hatemonger and an alleged Russian spy —since the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

The government argued the Syrian native's travel, activities and involvement in a false-document ring were consistent with supporters of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

The ruling says there were reasonable grounds to believe Almrei was a security danger when detained in October 2001, but there are no longer reasonable grounds to believe that today. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec **PQ MLA Bouchard resigns**



JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Parti Quebecois MLA for the riding of Vachon, Camil Bouchard, pauses as he announces his resignation as member of the National Assembly, yesterday at the legislature in Quebec City. The 64-year-old cited the frustration of life in opposition as his reason for quitting.

Deported alleged extremist missing

BELIZE Officials in Belize don't know what happened to an alleged Sikh extremist who made global waves when he bought a passport for the tropical paradise after being ordered out of Canada.



Iqbal Singh

Iqbal Singh has quietly vanished.

Ten years ago next month, Singh left Toronto for the Central American fun-and-sun destination.

His arrival in an unsuspecting Belize caused a media sensation. The spotlight glare was apparently intense enough to drive Singh from the oasis he found upon paying about US$50,000 for a passport through a since-cancelled immigrant investor program.

At the time, flummoxed Belizean officials said they hadn't been warned about the terror allegations against Singh. These days, they're not sure how to find him.

"We're not certain where Mr. Singh is at this time," said Insp. Bert Bowden of the Belize police department. "But he no longer resides in Belize."

Singh was suspected of belonging to the Babbar Khalsa, a terrorist group intent on establishing a separate Sikh homeland.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alleged Ponzi scheme trial delayed

ALBERTA The next court date for two men accused of defrauding global investors out of millions won't be until March so their lawyers can wade through 80,000 pages of documents.

Gary Sorenson and Milowe Brost are both charged with fraud and theft over $5,000 in the alleged Ponzi scheme.

Police allege thousands of investors in Canada, the United States and overseas were swindled out of about $400 million between 1999 and December 2008.

Brost appeared in a Calgary courtroom with his lawyer yesterday, but refused to speak to the media as he left. Sorenson was not present.

His lawyer, Don MacLeod, said outside court that it will take a while to get through all the information in the case.

"We anticipate highly voluminous disclosure will be provided within the short-term future and it's going to require all counsel, including the prosecution, some considerable while to review that."

MacLeod said so much material isn't unusual in a commercial case. He pointed out that a single real estate transaction can involve up to 300 pieces of paper.

"Commercial cases generate paper. That's a simple truism."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

TRAIN RCMP say a 29-year-old man came close to freezing to death after jumping onto a slow-moving train in central Alberta. The intoxicated man climbed aboard the train early Friday morning in Wetaskiwin, Alta., about 70 kilometres south of Edmonton. Police caught up and managed to save the man.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Child deaths from falling televisions increasing
The number of children being killed or injured by falling TV sets is increasing, even at a time when people are replacing clunky older models with lighter flat-screens, a new study says. One possible explanation: After families buy flat screens, they relegate a heavy TV set to unsafe furniture in other rooms, tempting children in unsupervised settings. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Maybe that's why they like bamboo

Genome mapping showing that pandas may prefer a bamboo-based diet because they can't taste meat could unlock secrets to ensuring the survival of the endangered species. The findings published in Nature magazine come from a study led by the Beijing Genomics Institute's branch in Shenzhen. Mutations in certain sequences of the giant panda's taste gene, which can affect the ability to experience savoury flavours such as meat and other high-protein foods, may have turned them onto a strict bamboo diet, the study said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlusconi remains hospitalized

ITALY Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi is in pain and will remain hospitalized until at least today with a fractured nose and two broken teeth from an attack by a mentally disturbed man who hit him in the face with a statuette, doctors and aides said.

The 73-year-old Berlusconi was rushed to the San Raffaele hospital in Milan with his face covered in blood after the attack Sunday. The alleged attacker, a 42-year-old man with a history of psychological problems, has been arrested. After a night of questioning at a police barracks, the man was moved to the San Vittore prison in Milan, the ANSA news agency said. Police have identified him as Massimo Tartaglia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nations end boycott

Developing countries agree to go back to table on GHG emissions

Poor countries ended a boycott of UN climate talks yesterday after getting assurances that rich nations were not conspiring to soften their commitments to cutting greenhouse gases, European officials said.

European Union environment spokesman Andreas Carlgren said informal talks resolved the impasse, which was started by African countries and backed by major developing countries, including China and India.

Rich and poor countries "found a reasonable solution," he said. Developing countries agreed to return to all working groups that they abandoned earlier in the day at the 192-nation conference, said Anders Frandsen, a spokesman for conference president Connie Hedegaard.

The boycott had disrupted efforts to forge a pact on global warming and forced the cancellation of formal working groups, delaying the frantic work of negotiators trying to resolve technical issues before the arrival of more than 110 world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, later this week. The move was largely seen as a ploy to shift the agenda to the responsibilities of the industrial countries and make emissions reductions the first item for discussion today. Poor countries, supported by China, said Hedegaard had raised suspicion that the conference was likely to kill the Kyoto Protocol. The United States withdrew from Kyoto over concerns that it would harm the U.S. economy and that China, India and other major greenhouse gas emitters were not required to take action.

China is now the world's largest greenhouse gas polluter. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



PETER DEJONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A person dressed as death on horseback and holding a scythe rides outside parliament in Copenhagen yesterday.

Ice-free in 5 years?

- New computer modelling suggests the Arctic Ocean may be nearly ice-free in the summertime as early as 2014, former U.S. vice-president Al Gore said yesterday at the UN climate conference.

Tag Heuer to stick with Tiger?

BUSINESS Swiss watch maker Tag Heuer said it will spend the next few weeks assessing its relationship with golfer Tiger Woods. The statement from the company yesterday afternoon marked a less enthusiastic stance about the world's richest athlete, who endorses the company's watches, than earlier in the day. That's when a spokeswoman told The Associated Press the company would continue with Woods, whom she called "the best in his domain."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Argentina **Students protest election**



ROLANDO ANDRADE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A student throws a stone toward police to protest the re-election of the Buenos Aires University dean outside Congress in Buenos Aires, yesterday. Students consider the election illegal, claiming that the council that elects the dean lacks sufficient student representation.

Women drowned, not raped and killed: Police

KASHMIR An Indian police agency investigating the deaths of two women in Kashmir said yesterday they drowned and were not raped and killed as alleged by locals, a ruling likely to further fuel anti-India sentiment.

The deaths of 22-year-old Neelofar Jan and her 17-year-old sister-in-law Asiya Jan in May ignited violent protests in the Himalayan region, where militant groups have fought Indian forces for independence or a union with Pakistan since 1989.

More than 68,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in the uprising and subsequent Indian crackdown. The two women disappeared as they walked home from their family's apple orchard in Shopian, a town 60 kilometres south of Indian Kashmir's main city Srinagar.

Local authorities first said the women drowned when they found their bodies one kilometre apart along a shallow stream on May 30, but police later said the two had been raped and killed.

Four police officers were later arrested on charges of suppressing and destroying evidence in the case. The officers were freed in September, further stoking residents' anger.

"It's a case of drowning," Anil Bhan from the Central Bureau of Investigation told reporters in Srinagar.

He said the agency charged 13 people "for fabricating evidence and intimidating witnesses" to lead to the conclusion that the women were raped and killed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sully auctions off hat

Capt. Chesley (Sully) Sullenberger has auctioned one of his pilot's caps for $5,800 US and will donate the proceeds to three San Francisco Bay area public schools. The signed hat — which was not worn the day Sullenberger safely landed a disabled jet into New York's Hudson River — drew 68 bids on eBay. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Obama implores banks to start lending again

U.S. President Barack Obama challenged top bankers yesterday to explore "every responsible way" to increase lending, saying they were obliged to help after being rescued by taxpayers.

In a statement after more than an hourlong meeting with the executives, Obama said he reminded them that much of the financial crisis that took the U.S. banking system to the brink of collapse had been "of their own making."

He also exhorted the executives — both in private and in public — to drop their opposition to an overhaul of the nation's financial industry.

"If they wish to fight common sense consumer protections, that's a fight I'm more than willing to have," Obama told reporters at the White House.

He also urged lenders to find creative ways to free up lending. Obama said banks have benefited from bailouts and should use that strength to lend more money to consumer and businesses.

"But given the difficulty businesspeople are having as lending has declined, and given the exceptional assistance banks received to get them through a difficult time," he said, "we expect them to explore every responsible way to help get our economy moving again."

"Given the exceptional assistance banks received to get them through a difficult time, we expect them to explore every responsible way to help get our economy moving again."
U.S. President Barack Obama

Delay, he said, was not an option he was willing to consider as his administration has focused on digging out an economy that has left more than 15 million Americans out of work. Many Americans resent the help the government gave to wealthy bankers while seeming to ignore their difficulties.

Bank of America chief executive Kenneth Lewis pledged to Obama that his bank would lend $5 billion US more to small- and mid-sized businesses in 2010 than it did in 2009. The bank said the move is part of a broader effort to support an economic recovery.

JPMorgan said last month that it would boost such lending by $4 billion US.

Obama's stern lecture came hours after Citigroup Inc. said that it was repaying $20 billion US in bailout money it received from the U.S. Treasury Department, in an effort to reduce government influence over the banking giant. The government will also sell its stake in the company.

The New York-based bank was among the hardest hit by the credit crisis and rising loan defaults and got one of the largest bailouts of any banks. Wells Fargo&Co. remains the last national bank that has yet to pay back its bailout money.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine **Activists protest soccer meeting**



EFREM LUKATSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Security guards stop an activist from the women's group FEMEN from climbing a barrier in Kiev yesterday, prior the opening of a UEFA soccer meeting. FEMEN is a movement campaigning against sex tourism and the trafficking of women in Ukraine.

News in brief

FIJI Two Fijian villagers are dead, several people are missing and thousands are homeless after a tropical cyclone battered the South Pacific nation yesterday, causing flooding, damaging homes and trees, and disrupting power supplies, officials said. Cyclone Mick, Fiji's first this season, ripped through the island of Viti Levu. Mick was a "very vicious" cyclone with damaging gale force winds which struck up to six hours earlier than expected, catching many people unprepared, said Tim Sutton of UNICEF. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Crisis worsening in Sudan: Group

DOCTORS At least 2,000 people have died and 250,000 have fled their homes following violence in southern Sudan this year, worsening a humanitarian crisis in a region seeking its independence, officials from a medical aid group said yesterday.

Officials from Doctors Without Borders said this year's violence is the worst since the signing of a 2005 peace deal between south Sudan and the north, an agreement that ended two decades of civil war.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Plea deals made in penis gluing

WISCONSIN Two women accused of seeking revenge on a cheating lover by gluing his penis to his stomach have reached plea deals.

Therese Ziemann, 48, was accused of doing the actual gluing. She pleaded no contest yesterday to reduced charges of disorderly conduct and misdemeanour battery. Her sister, 43-year-old Michelle Belliveau, pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct. The women allegedly lured the 37-year-old man to a motel and tied him to a bed in July.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RBC Dominion advisers allegedly aided tax evasion
Canada Revenue Agency alleges advisers at a branch of RBC Dominion Securities Inc. helped clients set up offshore accounts used for tax evasion, CBC News Online reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Business

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Canadians deeper in debt

The latest report on household debt from Statistics Canada carries a sober message: Collectively, Canadians are deeper in debt than ever before.

But economists say that record-low interest rates mean that debt loads are still manageable and will likely improve as the economy begins to recover from the depths of the recession.

The StatsCan report, released yesterday, comes on the heels of a stern warning about rising debt issued last week by the Bank of Canada.

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Surging stock markets pushed up Canadians' net worth in the third quarter, StatsCan said in its report. Canada's premier stock market, the S&P/TSX Composite Index rose 9.8 per cent in the third quarter. That's on top of a 19 per cent gain in the previous three months.

Household net worth, the value of families' assets such as cars, homes, savings accounts and investments, minus what they owe, reached $5.72 trillion at the end of September, StatsCan said.

That's an increase of 2.3 per cent, marking two quarters of gains after three consecutive drops.

But household debt also went up. It rose from July to September as Canadians rushed to take advantage of low interest rates.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toyota **Meet the new Prius**



KOJI SASAHARA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toyota Motor Corp. executive vice-president Takeshi Uchiyamada demonstrates during a photo session of its Prius Plug-in Hybrid in Tokyo, yesterday. Toyota showed its new plug-in hybrid, packed with a more powerful battery called lithium-ion that's different from the batteries used in Prius hybrids on roads today, available for leasing this month in Japan, the U.S. and Europe.

Higher interest rates headed this way next year, says RBC

MONEY The Royal Bank says Canadians can expect to be hit by higher interest rates in the second half of next year and in 2011.

Royal Bank economists say the Bank of Canada will be among the next group of central banks to move off floor-low rates, with the Canadian bank's overnight rate finishing 2010 at 1.25 per cent.

And RBC economists say they believe the trend-setting rate could rise to as much as 3.5 per cent in 2011.

The bank rate has been at 0.25 for most of 2009, a rate that is encouraging borrowing but also raising concerns that Canadians may be overextending themselves.

The Royal Bank says Canada has not suffered as badly as other economies in the recession, and will be among the first, after Australia and Norway, to start raising rates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

GDP increase

- According to a new forecast by RBC Economics, real gross domestic product is predicted to rise by 2.6 per cent next year and will continue to expand in 2011, at a 3.9 per cent clip.

In brief

WIRELESS New wireless phone company Wind Mobile has allied itself with movie and game rental chain Blockbuster Canada and will begin sales from outlets in Toronto and Calgary in the near future. Wind Mobile said yesterday it has begun providing information on its mobile phone services initially in 13 stores in Toronto and three in Calgary, with sales set to start some time in the near future.

BAILOUT Citigroup Inc. said yesterday it is repaying $20 billion US in bailout money it received from the Treasury Department, in an effort to reduce government influence over the banking giant. The government will also sell its stake in the company.

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Boralex has new partner in Europe

Renewable energy developer Boralex Inc. has entered into a partnership with Cube Infrastructure Fund Inc. to accelerate development of its European segment, particularly in wind and solar power, the Quebec-based company said yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Google eyes smartphone

Workers testing new handset

Google Inc. is determined to gain more influence over how the web is used on mobile phones, even if the next step in the quest tramples some of the relationships forged during its two-year expansion into the wireless industry.

The focus on Google's mobile ambitions is sharpening now that the Internet search leader is working on a new phone called "Nexus One." The handset is being tested by Google's 20,000 employees, who received the device just before the weekend.

The Wall Street Journal and the New York Times have described the employee testing as a prelude to selling the phone directly to consumers next year.

The phone — manufactured by Taiwan's HTC Corp. — wouldn't be tied to a specific carrier, unlike other devices using Google's mobile operating system, "Android." The autonomy of a so-called "unlocked" mobile phone could give consumers more freedom to select the carrier of their choice, although the unique technology running competing U.S. wireless networks will probably limit the options.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Smart move?

- Unless Google is willing to sell the phone at a loss, the Nexus One is likely to be much more expensive than Apple's iPhone and similar devices, which receive subsidies from wireless carriers.
- With subsidies, most "smart" phones sell for $50 US to $200 US, instead of the $400 US to $600 US price they'd have without the financial aid.
- The carriers recover their expense through service plans that cost $800 US to $1,000 US a year.

Soccer stadium **On target**



SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Construction workers are seen near Luanda Stadium, one of the stadiums that will host the 2010 African Cup of Nations soccer tournament, on the outskirts of Luanda, Angola, yesterday. Angola will host the African Cup of Nations soccer tournament from Jan. 10 to Jan. 31.

Lululemon on thin ice with cheeky line?

CLOTHING Yoga-wear retailer Lululemon Athletica has unveiled a cheeky new product line that could have Olympic organizers twisted up in knots.

The Vancouver-based company is striking a fine pose with a line of hooded sweatshirts, toques and T-shirts in honour of a "Cool Sporting Event That Takes Place in British Columbia Between 2009 & 2011."

Games organizers are notoriously protective of the Olympic brand, but Eric Petersen, head of community relations for Lululemon, says the company isn't breaking any laws.

Marketing expert Keith McIntyre says expect more of this kind of ambush marketing as Games time approaches.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Industrial output capacity drops

FACTORIES Canadian industries operated at 67.5 per cent of their production capacity in the third quarter, down marginally from 67.7 in the second quarter.

Statistics Canada reports widespread declines in capacity use among non-manufacturing industries more than offset increases among manufacturing industries. In manufacturing industries, the capacity utilization rate increased to 65.6 per cent, from the record low of 64.7 in the second quarter.

The transportation equipment, chemical, and wood product manufacturing industries accounted for nearly a third of total output. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business in brief

GAS Exxon Mobil will buy XTO Energy in an all-stock deal worth $31 billion US as the American oil giant moves aggressively to capitalize on the growing supply of natural gas at home. The takeover could also trigger copycat deals by other energy giants for major Canadian natural gas producers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



* Free Season given to those that purchase or lease a 2010 Matrix AWD "Martock Edition" during the month of December. One pass per vehicle purchase. Limited time purchase financing offer provided through Toyota Financial Services on approved credit on new retail sales of qualifying models. Lease offers include $1000 discount. Lease offers based on 48 months, 96,000KMper year. Extra KM charge of $0.07/km. Lease end value is $10,561.50. Representative finance example based upon $20,000 financed at 0% APR equals $555.56 per month for 36 months. $0 down payment or equivalent trade-in may be required. Cost of borrowing is $0, for a total obligation of $20,000. Taxes, freight and PDI of $1320, license, insurance, registration and applicable duties, levies and fees are extra. Make No Payments for 120 Days when you purchase finance a new unregistered Toyota vehicle through Toyota Financial Services. Offer applies on approved credit to retail customers who purchase and take delivery by January 4, 2010. The first monthly payment will be deferred for 90 days (until the 120th day of the contract) and finance contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charges will not accrue during the first 90 days of the contract. After 90 days, interest starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest over the term of the contract. See O'Regan's Toyota for details.

Interest rates/Savings accounts (Please check bank websites as some rates require minimum account balance)

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1.00%	0.75%	0.65%	1.20%	1.05%	1.00%	0.75%	1.25%	1.00%	0.75%

Your Money

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Most memorable gifts

AlisonOnMoney



Alison Griffiths

metronews.ca/alisononmoney

A few days ago I was thinking about the most memorable gifts I've ever received. Interestingly, there wasn't a purchased one on the list. Here are some of my top picks to give you a few ideas as the final countdown to Christmas begins.

A few days after my husband and I lost a beloved dog, a friend dropped off a gift basket for us which cheered us up immeasurably.

She's a single working parent with two young boys so money isn't exactly plentiful. But everything was perfect. There were hand picked flowers, several jars of jam made by one of her boys and some biscuits for our other dog. It brought tears to our eyes.

My sister works in theatre — not exactly the richest field — so she paints lovely cards which I use year round and I always receive the nicest comments when I send them out.

A dear friend gave me homemade body scrub last year smelling wonderfully of honey and lavender.



She's a busy woman with a television career and I appreciate the time she spent in her kitchen making my gift.

My husband's late godfather specialized in making electrical fixtures out of found items. Every Christmas he gave us a whimsical lamp which cost him nothing but time.

When my husband was an impoverished college student he made me a sand cast candle in the colours of the season with cute decorations imbedded in it. No diamond ring could have won my heart more quickly than his slightly tilted, red wax tower.

Note to guys: Forget the mall. Make something for your best beloved and she will swoon with surprise and delight.

The secret to thoughtful but inexpensive presents is putting a little effort into the conception and execution of the gift. The ads are screaming 10 shopping days left until Christmas! Consider instead 10 thinking and doing days left until Christmas.

Alison's Money Rule:

- With gifts, the thought really does count. Dip into your time instead of your wallet and the results will be inexpensive and memorable.

Alison Griffiths is a financial journalist, author and host of Maxed Out on the W Network. Write to her at alison@alisongriffiths.ca.

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RRSP season looming

Investing



Allan Small

metronews.ca/investing

What should investors think this RRSP season?

If interest rates rise next year, anyone with loans tied to the prime rate (variable loans) will see higher interest rate charges.

Regarding investments themselves, anyone who is in a fixed rate security like a bond, could see the price of that security fall. Bond funds or other managed products that invest in fixed income securities could see prices fall. Please remember for those that own individual fixed income securities like individual government or corporate bonds, your pricing will be affected as well but if you own these products to maturity, you will get your original investment back (face value).

A slow interest rate increase should not influence fixed income products too much at first. The environment for this year will still be great for individual investors to grow their portfolios.

Allan Small can be reached at asmall@dundeesecurities.com The views expressed are not necessarily those of Dundee Securities

On the web

Money Matters: Henry Choo Chong discusses the tax implications of charitable donations for 2009. Visit metronews.ca/moneymatters to read his column.



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Mic Mac Mall
Sunnyside Mall

(1) See store for details. Bonus gift available with new activations only. While quantities last. (2) Subject to approved credit.

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Comment

What's MacKay's future?



In the Afghan detainee controversy, Peter MacKay's stonewalling and roughhouse takedown of a diplomat was characteristic of this government whenever it is accused of anything. Did the defence minister have any choice but to respond in the way he did?

If, in fact, he had a free hand and chose the stealth route, then yes, MacKay should resign. If his line of defence was dictated from above, then it becomes a tougher call. As he made clear yesterday, he will not step down. But in the rumoured cabinet shuffle, he should be moved out of defence.

MacKay is one of several holders of big portfolios who has stumbled. He is part of a starless cabinet, an unlit galaxy except for the one and only, the prime minister himself.

Environment Minister Jim Prentice has been beaten up for his inactivity on global warming, inactivity that sees this country collecting fossil-of-the-year awards. But has the foot-dragging been his doing? Apparently, it's the PM who has prevented him from taking swifter action. Before environment, Prentice held the thankless Indian affairs portfolio, where his main task was to ditch the Kelowna accord. Considered a future leadership contender, he has hardly been able to burnish his credentials.


Peter MacKay

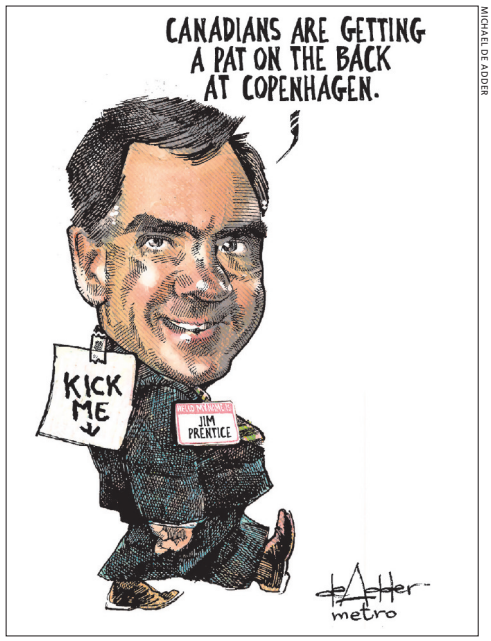
Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has had a better year than ones previous. But he has been dragging around a lot of chains — the income trust flip-flop, the disastrous fiscal update of last year and his repeated underestimating of the federal deficit. Again the question needs to be asked — how many of the calls were his own?

The prime minister has some breathing room on the political calendar and could move one, all or none of the above. Strong performers like Immigration Minister Jason Kenney and Trade Minister Stockwell Day could be promoted. Long-serving Justice Minister Rob Nicholson, who is to the right of Sarah Palin, could be moved as well as Transport Minister John Baird, the Commons court jester who specializes in drubbing opponents. Taking him on is like arguing with a brass band.

One likely move will see Maxime Bernier, the former foreign minister who resigned after getting caught up in the biker-girl, lost-documents scandal, brought back to cabinet because he is popular in Quebec.

But no one is too excited about any pending changes. Usually, cabinet shuffles are a big deal. Not in Harperland. In his cabinets no one gets to be a heavyweight. They all bob around, waiting for the word from on high.

Lawrence Martin is a journalist and author of 10 books who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Afghan detainees: A moral dilemma



After the recent bout of public scrutiny over accusations by former senior Canadian diplomat Richard Colvin about Ottawa's indifference toward the torture of detainees in Afghanistan, we need to recall that, in 2005, former prime minister Paul Martin gave the thumbs up to then-defence minister Bill Graham to negotiate a detainee transfer agreement with the Afghanistan government.

At the root of this ongoing dilemma of how to process these detainees is our high regard for human rights: The golden element that keeps a robust flock of immigrants and refugees coming our way. Human rights is the cornerstone of our democracy. For this reason, we hold our authorities to a higher moral standard, having delegated ourselves the responsibility of being international role models, but we need to do so with understanding.

For instance, most of us can not fathom the routine atrocities committed by many foreign regimes such as the Taliban, such as: Shooting eight boys to death because they laughed at Taliban fighters, mutilations, beatings, gang rapes and the torture of women and children; burning entire families alive. More frightening is that these atrocities represent the vision these barbaric insurgents hope to export to other parts of the world, with their deep-seated hatred and opposition to Western values.

Based on these facts, we need to appreciate that justice would be better served if groups like Amnesty International would up the ante in renouncing the heinous deeds of an enemy that has gone so far as to hide among civilians and disguise its members as emergency and media personnel.

These unlawful combatants are not protected by the Geneva Conventions, even though there are those who argue they should be. And they most certainly do not fall under our Charter of Rights of Freedoms. However, Justice Anne McTavish did rule that Afghan detainees do have rights under their own constitution and international law.

Given the prior floods of accusations about the Western lack of respect for the sovereignty of foreign governments, how do we justify bypassing Afghanistan's own rules of engagement, albeit primitive? According to Brig.-Gen. Daniel Menard, progress is happening as Afghan authorities are being receptive to Canada's advice on how to treat detainees.

We need to exercise patience and support of ongoing efforts to work out a moral solution concerning these detainees.

Christine Williams is the producer and host of the live current affairs daily talk show On the Line at CTS TV in Burlington, Ont.

Worth mentioning

Tunes that get you in holiday shopping mood

For many holiday shoppers, the only thing worse than the crowds and endless lineups is the Christmas music.

But next time you roll your eyes at yet another mall rendition of Jingle Bell Rock, think of Kym de la Roche. She's been listening to Christmas music since about August.

As a member of Holt Renfrew's creative department in Toronto, de la Roche is responsible for compiling the store's Christmas playlist. Compiling a good Christmas playlist isn't easy, either — not only do good holiday songs come in short supply, de la Roche must also ensure that every tune falls "in line with the Holt Renfrew DNA."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Top 10 songs

Here are Kym de la Roche's picks this year for the 10 best Christmas songs to shop to:

1. The Ventures — Sleigh Ride
2. Badly Drawn Boy — Donna & Blitzen
3. Band Aid — Do They Know It's Christmas?
4. Eartha Kitt — Santa Baby
5. The Dandy Warhols — Little Drummer Boy
6. Matt Dusk — Cool Yule
7. Otis Redding — Merry Christmas Baby
8. Any song on A Charlie Brown Christmas by Vince Guaraldi Trio
9. Martha Wainwright — Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
10. Edith Piaf — Le Noel de la Rue

We Know What You're Thinking



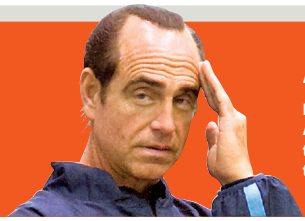
45% The percentage of Canadians who say the festive season is the most stressful time of year.

IPSOS REID

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Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Lackey has deal with Red Sox: Reports
John Lackey and the Boston Red Sox have reached a tentative agreement on a five-year contract, according to media reports. Lackey, one of the top pitchers on the free-agent market after eight seasons with the Angels, was in Boston for a physical yesterday, according to reports. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports



Argos dump coach

Bart Andrus has paid the price for a 3-15 season. The Toronto Argonauts have fired the first-year head coach after finishing as the worst team in the CFL. The 51-year-old Andrus was named the Argos' 40th head coach on Jan. 16. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

'A fight to the end'

The crease is crowded for Canadian junior squad

There was no question for team management who are the four best 19-and-under goaltenders in Canada, but a huge decision looms on who are the best two.

Jake Allen, Matt Hackett, Martin Jones and Olivier Roy are in a tight battle at the team selection camp for the two spots for goalies on the Canadian squad that will play at the world junior championship Dec. 26-Jan. 5 in Regina and Saskatoon.

Allen, of the Montreal Juniors, is the front-runner because of his greater national and international experience, but none of the other three can be counted out.

"They've been consistent throughout the year and, in such a short event, consistency is crucial," goaltending coach Ron Tugnutt said yesterday.

"This is going to be a fight to the end for these guys."



RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian national junior team goaltender Martin Jones, from the Calgary Hitmen, makes a save during practice yesterday at the team's selection camp for the World Junior Ice Hockey Championships in Regina.

Roy, of the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles, is the shootout king. The six-foot-four Jones, of the Calgary Hitmen, has the widest wingspan. And Hackett, of the Plymouth Whalers, has the best regular season numbers among the four.

"We'll discuss them as a group," Tugnutt added. "We're in a good situation."

> **"We're in a good situation."**
> Ron Tugnutt, coach

The four were deemed the best at the end of last season and were the only goalies invited to the Canadian team's summer camp. Others were looked at since then, particularly in the Subway Series last month against a visiting Russian team, but none could dislodge the quartet battling for spots this week at the Brandt Centre.

"That isn't saying there aren't other really good goalies in the country, but at this point we feel these are the four guys at the top," said Canadian head scout Al Murray.

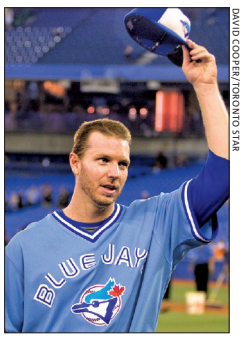
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Halladay dealt to Phillies: Reports

BASEBALL The Toronto Blue Jays are poised to make a bold and painful move toward rebuilding the franchise by dealing franchise icon Roy Halladay for a slew of young players that will help kick-start the process.

Multiple reports say a tentative and complicated three-way deal has been reached that would send the right-handed ace to Philadelphia, with the Phillies flipping left-hander Cliff Lee, another Cy Young Award winner, to the Seattle Mariners.

Both teams would then send prospects to the Blue Jays and several sources indicated to The Canadian Press that right-hander Phillippe Aumont of Gatineau, Que., would be among the return from Seattle. There was lots of speculation that outfielder Mike Saunders of Victoria would join him. The Phillies are believed to be including lefty J.A. Happ, righty Joe Blanton and outfielder Dominic Brown in the trade, although the names all around varied from source to source and report to report.



DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR

Roy Halladay

Alex Anthopoulos declined to comment on what looms as his first player move of major consequence since taking over as Blue Jays GM.

Most of the information came out of Philadelphia, where Halladay was yesterday to take a physical required to complete the deal according to The Associated Press. The AP also said the commissioner's office had granted the Phillies and Blue Jays a 72-hour window on Sunday to complete the trade, likely to give Philadelphia a chance to negotiate a contract extension with Halladay.

The 32-year-old's $40-million US, three-year contract expires at the end of the 2010 season and includes a no-trade clause.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Belichick fires back in defence of Moss

NFL New England coach Bill Belichick fired back yesterday at two Carolina defenders who criticized the effort of wide receiver Randy Moss.

Belichick, who rarely rips opponents, said, "my response would be that's a lot of conversation coming from a team that just lost another game."

After Moss had just one catch for 16 yards in the Patriots' 20-10 win over the Panthers on Sunday, cornerback Chris Gamble and safety Chris Harris said Moss, who had a reputation for going less than full speed with Minnesota and Oakland when those teams struggled, didn't go all out during the game.

"We knew he was going to shut it down," Gamble said. "He'd just give up a lot ... You can tell (by his) body language."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESSS

Sports in brief

NFL Injured Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez will practise this week, although coach Rex Ryan is uncertain what the rookie's status will be for New York's next game against Atlanta. Ryan said he wants to see how Sanchez gets through tomorrow's practice before making a decision.

INVESTIGATION A coach on Canada's long-track speedskating team is under investigation in the Netherlands after allegations of trying to buy a spot in the 5,000-metre race at the 2006 Olympics. Ingrid Paul and Dutch skater Gretha Smit have been accused of offering Poland's Katarzyna Wojcicka 50,000 euros ($77,800) for her starting spot in the race.

ARRESTED St. Louis Cardinals third baseman David Freese has been arrested in St. Louis County on suspicion of driving while intoxicated. Police in Maryland Heights, Mo., gave details of the arrest yesterday. Freese was stopped at 2:40 a.m. CT Saturday for a traffic offence, then given a sobriety test.

SOCCER Former Birmingham co-owners David Sullivan and David Gold reportedly offered to buy troubled Premier League club West Ham for 50 million pounds ($86 million) yesterday. The Hammers are in the relegation zone after being hit last season by the bankruptcy of its Icelandic chairman and collapse of the company that sponsored its shirts.

SCANDAL Former Juventus chief executive Antonio Giraudo was sentenced to three years in prison yesterday for his role in a match-fixing scandal that shook Italian soccer, news reports said.

MLB Baseball commissioner Bud Selig plans to establish a study group that will examine on-field issues that could include replay, umpires and pace of game.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Matsui an Angel?

A person familiar with the negotiations tells The Associated Press that Hideki Matsui and the Los Angeles Angels have reached a preliminary agreement on a one-year contract worth about $6.5 million US. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Habs' comeback bid falls short

NHL

Canucks 3 Sabres 4

AT

Clarke MacArthur's power play goal in the third period was the winner as the streaking Buffalo Sabres survived a furious comeback attempt by the Montreal Canadiens to finally prevail 4-3 last night.

Andrej Sekera, Patrick Kaleta and Tim Kennedy also scored for the Northeast Division-leading Sabres (20-9-2), who won their fourth straight and their eighth in 10 games.

Andrei Kostitsyn had two goals and an assist and Mike Cammalleri also scored for the Canadiens (15-16-3), who are winless in three games following a three-game winning streak.

Kostitsyn, who had two goals in his first 26 games this season, now had six goals and two assists in his last five contests.

Ryan Miller allowed three goals for only the second time in his last 11 starts, but still made 21 stops to improve his record to 19-6-2. His biggest save came with only 19 seconds to play in regulation with Buffalo down a man, as he slid across to rob Cammalleri on a one-timer attempt to save the victory.

Jaroslav Halak made 23 stops in the Montreal net, losing for the second straight time to Buffalo. He allowed 10 goals in those two losses.

The Montreal power play went 2-for-4 on the night and is now 7-for-16 over the last five games. But it couldn't take advantage of a Toni Lydman penalty at 18:00 of the third to tie it up.

With the Sabres up 2-1 after two periods, Montreal tied it at 2:36 of the third with Kostitsyn's second of the game and eighth of the year, 10 seconds after the Sabres were called for too many men on the ice.

Cammalleri got the puck on the side boards and sent it to Plekanec in the slot, who wheeled and sent it to Kostitsyn in front for a tip-in goal through Miller's legs.

The Sabres grabbed the lead again 3-2 at 12:33 when Kennedy had the puck bounce out to him after a scramble in front of Halak and buried his fourth of the season.

But the Canadiens didn't wait long to tie it back up, with Cammalleri taking a Kostitsyn fee to enter the Sabres zone and picking the top corner from the right faceoff dot at 12:51 for his 18th of the season.

The Canadiens then took two straight penalties, as Glen Metropolit took a double minor and Ryan O'Byrne was called for high-sticking shortly thereafter. The Sabres capitalized when Drew Stafford found MacArthur alone at the far post for his 10th of the season at 14:41 of the third to make it 4-3 Buffalo.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Linesman Brad Kowachik break apart Montreal Canadien Maxim Lapierre and Buffalo Sabre Craig Rivet last night in Montreal.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

OVERALL STANDINGS
EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-Washington	33	20	7	6	118	94	46
d-New Jersey	31	22	8	1	91	68	45
d-Buffalo	31	20	9	2	85	68	42
Pittsburgh	33	22	10	1	105	87	45
Boston	32	16	10	6	84	80	38
Atlanta	31	17	11	3	99	90	37
Ottawa	32	16	12	4	92	96	36
Montreal	34	15	16	3	88	99	33
Florida	34	13	14	7	95	112	33
Philadelphia	31	15	15	1	90	88	31
NY Rangers	32	14	15	3	88	96	31
Tampa Bay	32	11	12	9	77	94	31
Toronto	33	12	14	7	97	116	31
NY Islanders	33	12	14	7	84	107	31
Carolina	32	7	19	6	77	117	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-Los Angeles	34	21	10	3	106	101	45
d-Colorado	35	19	10	6	103	99	44
d-Chicago	31	20	8	3	92	67	43
San Jose	34	19	8	7	111	92	45
Calgary	32	19	9	4	93	77	42
Nashville	33	19	11	3	88	91	41
Phoenix	33	19	12	2	81	75	40
Detroit	33	17	11	5	92	89	39
Dallas	32	14	8	10	93	94	38
Vancouver	32	18	14	0	101	84	36
Edmonton	32	15	13	4	98	100	34
Columbus	33	14	13	6	99	117	34
Minnesota	32	15	14	3	84	93	33
St. Louis	30	13	12	5	74	82	31
Anaheim	32	12	13	7	91	103	31

d - division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SOL (shootout loss) column.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Toronto 3 Ottawa 2
Florida 7 N.Y. Islanders 1
Philadelphia 3 Boston 1
Atlanta 3 N.Y. Rangers 2 (SO)
Detroit 3 Phoenix 2
Nashville 5 Columbus 3
Buffalo 4 Montreal 3
Los Angeles at Vancouver

TODAY'S GAMES

Philadelphia at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Calgary at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Columbus at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Washington at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE
ATLANTIC DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	20	4	.833	-
Toronto	11	15	.423	9½
New York	8	15	.348	11
Philadelphia	6	18	.250	13½
New Jersey	2	22	.083	17½

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	18	6	.750	-
Atlanta	17	6	.739	½
Miami	11	11	.500	6
Charlotte	9	13	.409	8
Washington	7	14	.333	9½

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	17	7	.708	-
Milwaukee	11	11	.500	5
Detroit	11	12	.478	5½
Chicago	8	14	.364	8
Indiana	8	14	.364	8

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	18	7	.720	-
San Antonio	12	9	.571	3½
Houston	13	10	.565	3½
New Orleans	10	13	.435	7
Memphis	10	14	.417	7½

NORTHWEST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	17	7	.708	-
Utah	14	9	.609	2½
Portland	14	11	.560	3½
Oklahoma City	12	10	.545	4
Minnesota	3	21	.125	14

PACIFIC DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	18	4	.818	-
Phoenix	16	8	.667	3
Sacramento	10	12	.455	8
L.A. Clippers	9	13	.409	9
Golden State	7	17	.292	12

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Philadelphia 117 Golden State 101
Orlando 106 Indiana 98
Boston 110 Memphis 105
Dallas 94 New Orleans 90
Minnesota at Utah
Oklahoma City at Denver
Washington at L.A. Clippers

TODAY'S GAMES

New Jersey at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
New York at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Detroit at Houston, 8:30 p.m.
San Antonio at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Sacramento at Portland, 10 p.m.

NFL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Arizona at San Francisco

Familiar issues on the agenda as NHL board of governors meet

Another year, another ritzy resort and another round of discussion on how the economy is impacting the business of professional hockey.

There's a sense of deja vu as the NHL's board of governors converge on The Inn at Spanish Bay in California for meetings today and tomorrow.

A year ago, the venue was the posh Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Fla., where the league's owners and executives heard from economists about the troubled times ahead. They've since spent 12 months operating in that economic climate and are now one owner short with the NHL currently in charge of the Phoenix Coyotes.

The Coyotes will be a major topic of discussion this week and not just because the other 29 teams are currently on the hook for their massive losses. On Friday night, the league announced that the Ice Edge Holdings investment group had signed a letter of intent to purchase the team with the aim of keeping it in suburban Glendale, Ariz., over the long term.

However, the announcement came with some caution.

"While much remains to be done, the NHL looks forward to working closely with Ice Edge to bring the sale to conclusion as expeditiously as possible," said deputy commissioner Bill Daly.

Ice Edge is a group of Canadian and American investors with five majority owners — Daryl Jones, Anthony LeBlanc, John Breslow, Keith McCullough and Todd Jordan.

Some governors are thought to be skeptical of both the sale and the viability of the Phoenix market moving forward. They'll no doubt be interested to hear what commissioner Gary Bettman has to say on the topic because it will ultimately be up to them to approve the sale in the future.

A number of NHL teams are experiencing problems at the gate. The Coyotes are last in the league with less than 10,000 fans per game, but that's understandable given the ugly bankruptcy proceedings and uncertainty that surrounded the franchise right up until the eve of the season.

But how to explain the 26th-ranked Colorado Avalanche, who are averaging under 14,000 people per game? The Denver fans who once put together a sellout streak of almost 500 games aren't coming out to watch a team that has surprisingly hovered near the top of the Western Conference all season long.

Elsewhere, top pick John Tavares has done his part with a solid showing on the ice, but fans of the New York Islanders haven't flocked to watch the teenage sniper. Through 12 home games, the team is down 1,000 spectators on average from a year ago.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian expansion

- Overall, the six Canadian markets all appear to be on solid footing, buoyed by the 95-cent dollar. In fact, there's expected to be some discussion about the viability of additional Canadian markets — Quebec, Winnipeg, Hamilton, a second team in Toronto — for down the road.

Canadian women aren't taking game versus U.S. lightly

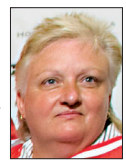
HOCKEY If momentum is swinging back in Canada's favour in its women's hockey rivalry with the United States, Canadian head coach Melody Davidson doesn't see it that way.

"I've been around this rivalry long enough to know that every day is a new day and both teams are so close," she said yesterday.

Canada was in a 2-6 slump versus the U.S., including losses in the last two world championship finals, after September's Hockey Canada Cup in Vancouver.

Since then, the Canadians have won four of their last five against the Americans heading into today's game in Calgary (TSN, 10 p.m. ET).

The game is the fourth of a six-game travelling exhibition series that both countries are using to prepare for the Winter Olympics starting Feb. 12 in Vancouver and Whistler, B.C.



Melody Davidson

According to Hockey Canada, about 8,000 tickets had been sold as of yesterday for the game at Pengrowth Saddledome, which seats 19,289.

The Canadians are coming off a 4-2 win over the U.S. on Saturday in Denver to improve to 3-0 in the series, but they are 1-3 against the Americans in international tournaments this winter.

The U.S. beat Canada twice at the Hockey Canada Cup, which was an Olympic test event, in September. They split two games at the annual Four Nations Cup in November with Canada winning the final 5-1 in Finland.

The exhibition series concludes with games Dec. 30 in St. Paul, Minn., and Jan. 1 in Ottawa.

U.S. head coach Mark Johnson says the exhibition games help him figure out which players he wants on his Olympic team and the result is less important to him.

"You're trying to find out about your team and put this thing together and it really becomes a marathon," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pretty Woman signs on him beauty product line
Julia Roberts, who most famously played a sex-trade worker in the movie Pretty Woman, has been named ambassador for the beauty product line Lancôme. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Health & Beauty

Nothing says I love you like a billy goat



When asked what she wanted for Christmas, R&B singer Rihanna told a British television interviewer that she wants some "great food and great sex." The latter may be a little hard to wrap, but how about a gift that may just lead to some greatness in that department?

In his 25 years as a marriage and family therapist in Winnipeg, Dr. Todd Sellick says that the biggest problem couples face when it comes to sex is not knowing each other's fantasies or expectations. That's why he and his wife Jan developed A Private Affair: The Erotic Game of Secrets, Plans & Promises for Couples, a 500-card game that facilitates the sharing of sexual secrets, opinions, and requests among other things.

I love that you can play it anywhere, in restaurants, over coffee, while out for a walk, or during car rides, say, en route to the in-laws for Christmas dinner. You're bound to arrive in a good mood. $34.99 Available through aprivateaffairgame.com

If you discover that one of her fantasies is to have a nice, long romantic massage, invest in a set of bSwish Massage Candles. The scented candles come in Fig Wood, Amber and Rose Patchouli. The candles melt at low temperature are set in an elegantly stylish porcelain holder designed to let you pour the warm wax on to your hands or directly on to your honey for a soothing and sexy massage. $22 Available at comeasyouare.com.

Express your love for your partner by being selfless. OXFAM Canada has a number of ways you can help others from buying a chicken or a goat for someone in the developing world or by supporting home-based care workers who attend to people suffering from HIV and AIDS. $15 Chicken/$58 Goat/$150 AIDS/HIV home care. Available at oxfamunwrapped.ca

Finally, you don't need to spend a lot of money to come up with a romantic gift for your sweetie. Do what author Ellen Green did. She kept an ongoing list of every sweet, remarkable and unremarkable thing her husband did throughout the year and gave him the list every Valentine's Day.

She published the best of 20 years of lists in Remember the Sweet Things: One List, Two Lives, and Twenty Years of Marriage.

If you start now, you should have quite a list by next Christmas.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.


PHOTOS.COM

A new study has shown that prescription pain killers were linked to more deaths than heroin.

Prescription pain killers

Opioid-related deaths double since 1991

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

They kill pain but they also kill people. A new Canadian study has found that deaths from prescription pain medications are on the rise.

"More people will die from prescription painkillers in 2009 than from H1N1," Dr. Irfan Dhalla told Metro in an email.

Dhalla is lead author of the study and a clinician-scientist at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. Dhalla and his colleagues examined trends in the prescribing of opioid painkillers in Ontario from 1991 to 2007. Common opioids include Oxycontin, Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol with codeine, Demerol, and morphine. These painkillers are often prescribed for acute pain, such as post-surgery pain or the pain associated with a broken bone. They may be used also for severe chronic pain, such as from some forms of cancer. Doctors are now also prescribing opioids for less-severe pain, such as chronic back pain.

When researchers studied data for all deaths from 1991 to 2004, they found that opioid-related deaths doubled in that period, from 13.7 per million in 1991 to 27.2 per million in 2004. Prescribing of oxycodone — the active ingredient in Oxycontin — has risen very rapidly. From 1999 to 2004, the number of deaths related to oxycodone rose fivefold, says Dhalla.

There are far more deaths in Ontario from prescription painkillers than from heroin or cocaine, noted the study.

When healthy eating becomes harmful living

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

DIETING Healthy eating: Some people take it too far.

When people eliminate large numbers of foods in the name of health and then become obsessive-compulsive about food, this could signal they have a type of eating disorder.

Although "healthy eating disorder," or orthorexia nervosa as it is called, is not formally recognized as a mental illness, it does exist and is increasingly being noticed, says Colorado physician Steven Bratman, author of Health Food Junkies.

Orthorexia nervosa begins with a desire to avoid foods that are unhealthy, such as junk food. More and more foods end up on the "bad" list over time. Avoidance becomes fear and then sufferers develop an obsession with finding foods that won't make them sick.

They lose weight, and sometimes it is hard to find enough to eat in order to carry on normal activities in their day-to-day life.

If you have a friend who fits this scenario and suspect they may be in need of help you should suggest that they see their physician.

News in brief

SNACKS The Centre for Science in the Public Interest recently reviewed movie theatre snacks to see how they rated. It turns out that a popcorn, large drink, and M&M's are 2,320 calories and 24 g saturated fat. CELIA MILNE/METRO CANADA

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Food bank help

Loblaw is introducing a new "Extra Helping" logo to be placed in store aisles alongside the food items most needed by the local food bank, such as canned fish or meat, lentils and beans and hot/cold cereal. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Food



Pile up your cone

Cuisipro's newfangled Ice Cream Scoop & Stack creates stackable cylinders for cones as well as "elegant desserts," as the makers say. This is not a quick tool: You shove the scoop into a tub of ice cream, using a pull, twist, push and release sequence to create your cylinder. The results can be fun and colourful though. The Scoop & Stack retails for $19.99 at kitchen shops. It is dishwasher-safe and is available in a variety of colours. For the nearest store, call 1-866-306-3672 (toll-free). TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

A casserole fit for a cowboy

Cowboy Casserole

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/3 lb (600 g) unpeeled baking potatoes, scrubbed and thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 Tbsp (20 mL) olive oil
- 1 tsp (5 mL) tomato paste
- 14 oz (398 mL) can baked beans
- 1/4 lb (125 g) frozen peas
- 1/4 lb (125 g) frozen green beans
- 7 oz (200 g) can corn, drained
- 2 Tbsp (25 mL) barbecue sauce
- 3 1/2 oz (100 g) smoked cheese, roughly chopped

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Put potatoes into pot of boiling water. Bring back to boil; half-cover and simmer until just tender, but not breaking up. Drain thoroughly, reserving 4 tbsp (60 mL) cooking water. Tip potatoes into bowl, add oil and toss to coat. Set aside.

2. Blend tomato paste with reserved hot water in pot. Tip in baked beans, peas, green beans, corn and barbecue sauce. Heat gently, stirring, until mixture is barely warm and peas and green beans have thawed. Tip into shallow casserole dish, spreading into even layer. Scatter over cubes of smoked cheese.

3. Arrange potato slices over top, overlapping slightly to completely cover bean and cheese mixture. Bake 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender and top is golden brown.



Cowboy casserole from Reader's Digest.

Salmon Puffs with Tzatziki

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 lb (375 g) pack pre-rolled puff pastry
- 5 1/3 oz (160 g) skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1/2-in. (1 cm) squares
- 1/4 lb (125 g) frozen fava beans
- 1 oz (30 g) fresh dill, chopped
- 1 oz (30 g) snipped fresh chives
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cucumber
- 1 cup (250 mL) plain yogurt

METHOD:

1. Remove pastry from fridge. Preheat oven to 460°F (240°C). Put salmon squares in bowl and add frozen fava beans and herbs. Season and mix well.

2. Unroll pastry, then cut into four 7 x 3 1/3 -in. (17.5 x 8.5 cm) pieces. Brush egg lightly all over pastry. Mound salmon mixture in centres of pastry pieces. Place ricotta cheese on each mound of filling. Fold long ends of pastry up to meet over filling and pinch together at top. Press sides together to seal.

3. Transfer pastries to baking sheet and brush with egg. Bake until puffed and golden.

4. Meanwhile, grate cucumber into sieve and press out excess moisture over sink. Mix cucumber into yogurt. Transfer tzatziki to serving bowl and serve with hot salmon puffs.

Brie Turkey Pockets with Cabbage and Walnuts

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 oz (30 g) fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 dessert apple, peeled, cored and grated
- 4 thick turkey breasts
- 5 oz (150 g) brie, cut into 4 wedges
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) olive oil
- 1 lb (500 g) green cabbage, finely shredded
- 8 scallions, sliced
- 1 3/4 oz (50 g) walnuts, chopped

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 460°F (240°C). Mix ginger and apple. Cut horizontally through each turkey breast (not all the way through). Divide ginger and apple mixture among pockets, then push wedge of cheese into each. Press meat together into shape and push filling evenly in pockets.

2. Put pockets neatly in one layer in shallow ovenproof dish. Brush with 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil and sprinkle with seasoning to taste. Bake until turkey is browned on top and cooked through, and filling is running out in places.

3. Meanwhile, heat remaining oil in large pan and add cabbage, scallions and walnuts. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until cabbage is reduced in volume and lightly cooked. Add seasoning to taste. Transfer pockets to plates. Add some cabbage to each plate and serve immediately.

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!



LiquidAssets



Peter Rockwell

metronews.ca/liquidassets

Pour like Santa

Well here we are at the holiday home stretch. Thanks to my wife's expertise in the kitchen - and the central location of the Rockwell mansion - we tend to play host for the big family feast and what seems like a never ending stream of well wishers.

They all arrive thirsty; so finding drinkable wine options that lets you pour like Santa, even though you've spent like Scrooge, is every host's Christmas wish. Since trying to appeal to a variety of personal preferences is never easy I recommend going with a bright, fruity red and a fresh, dry white with an eye on larger format bottles to save a few bucks.

An Aussie shiraz is the quintessential cocktail red (meaning it shines without food) with Lindemans 2008 Bin 50 Shiraz (1500 ml, $22.95 - $24.99) a jammy mix of black raspberry, red licorice and a lingering touch of pepper spice.

For a crisp, straightforward white think Italy and Fontana di Papa's 2008 Colli Albani (1000 ml, $8.35 - $10.79): a classic bargain blend of malvasia and trebbiano that's ripe with refreshing green fruit and tastes best served ice cold right out of the fridge.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.



Peter Rockwell is the everyman's wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years. Follow him on twitter @TheRealWineGuy and email liquidassets@eastlink.ca.

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AFI's top 10 movies
The American Film Institute has announced its list of Top 10 movies with honours going to Coraline, The Hangover, The Hurt Locker, The Messenger, Precious, A Serious Man, A Single Man, Sugar, Up and Up in the Air. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Entertainment



Viking voyage
Leonardo DiCaprio is set to star in a film directed by Mel Gibson that's set in the world of Viking culture, Variety reports. The script is by the writer who won an Oscar for The Departed. EW.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

L.A. awards go to Mo'Nique, Waltz

MOVIES Mo'Nique has won the supporting-actress award for Precious and Christoph Waltz has earned the supporting-actor prize for Inglourious Basterds from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Mo'Nique won for her role as a hateful welfare mom in Precious. Waltz for his role as a savage Nazi in Inglourious Basterds.

Basterds, Nine lead Critics' Choice pack

MOVIE Inglourious Basterds and Nine lead contenders for the Critics' Choice Movie Awards with 10 nominations each, including best picture.

Other best-picture nominees are Avatar, An Education, The Hurt Locker, Invictus, Precious, A Serious Man, Up and Up in the Air.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'Strange' job rewarded

Depp collects lifetime achievement award

Hollywood heartthrob Johnny Depp suspects he'll never get used to receiving awards for his acting work.

Depp, best known for his Oscar-nominated role as Captain Jack Sparrow in Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean blockbusters, made the comments Sunday night before receiving a career achievement award at the Bahamas International Film Festival.

"Whenever anybody says they are going to give me some kind of award, I'm always a little stupefied by the notion. The first thing I say is 'why?'," Depp told a small scrum of reporters. "I just go to work like anyone else, except my job happens to be a little stranger."

Lit by cameras during a red carpet event, Depp said he planned on spending Christmas on his private island ringed with white sand off Exuma.

"The place is as close to paradise as anywhere you can get," said Depp, wearing a black pinstriped suit and tinted glasses with heavy black frames.

Fellow acting superstar Sean Connery, who also owns a home in the Bahamas, presented Depp with the award at the Balmoral Club in Nassau.

The festival's founder, Leslie Vanderpool, described Depp as an "icon" who is one of the finest actors of his generation.

"What makes this tribute to Johnny even more special is that he has a home in the Bahamas and possesses a true love and appreciation for the region and culture," Vanderpool said in a statement.

Depp's diverse screen credits through the years include starring roles in Donnie Brasco, Edward Scissorhands, and What's Eating Gilbert Grape.

In September, Disney announced that a new Pirates of the Caribbean film is on the horizon. Depp will reprise his celebrated role as Sparrow in Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, slated for summer of 2011.



Johnny Depp received a career achievement award at the Bahamas International Film Festival over the weekend.

Depp said he's enjoyed playing all of his screen characters. "I'm still amazed I get jobs after all this time," he quipped.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





Kid Rock, Grohl sue bar

Kid Rock and Dave Grohl are suing a small town bar for allegedly jacking their tunes. The two rockers dropped a copyright infringement lawsuit on a Canton, Ohio watering hole because it allegedly didn't have the licensing it needed to play their music. TMZ.COM

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DVD picks



Inglourious Basterds

Director: Quentin Tarantino

PURE WISH-FULFILMENT fantasy by Quentin Tarantino (Once upon a time in Nazi-occupied France...), in which Hitler and his stooges stand to get what's coming to them, in a way that makes cinema itself seem like the grand liberator.

Grammatically challenged, factually unhinged and too long for its own good, this World War II thriller nevertheless soars thanks to one glorious performance — and it's not the one you think.

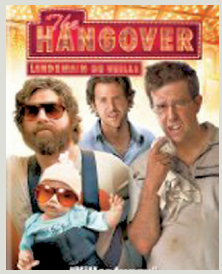
Top-billed Brad Pitt is merely amusing as Tennessee moonshiner Lt. Aldo The Apache Raine, who leads scalp-hunting Jewish-American soldiers against Hitler in Nazi-occupied France. But he's almost a Sgt. Rock parody and he's MIA for vast stretches.

The film's real star is Austria's Christoph Waltz, a multilingual wizard who inhabits the role of Col. Hans Landa, the smirking Gestapo officer known as "The Jew Hunter" for his uncanny sleuthing.

Heads are sliced and skulls are smashed — the latter being the specialty of Eli Roth's character, wild-eyed baseball nut Sgt. Donny Donowitz. But the film is less violent than the bloodthirsty ads suggest, and also less so than Tarantino's Kill Bill saga.

These Basterds blend into a much richer story, a revisionist romp with stars you don't immediately see shining.

Extras include a round-table discussion with Tarantino, Pitt and film writer Elvis Mitchell and several featurettes, including Making of Nation's Pride and The Original Inglorious Bastards.



The Hangover

Director: Todd Phillips

A NO-STAR cast takes a shop-worn theme about boys being bad in Las Vegas, and turns it into something fresh, funny and profitable — $277 million US for the domestic market, enough to make it history's most successsful "R" rated comedy. Take that, Hollywood know-it-alls!

This is one clever little film. Director Todd Phillips and scripters Jon Lucas and Scott Moore cleverly keep us in suspense about how the monster hangover happened. First they show us the aftermath as three confused groomsmen (Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis) turn Vegas upside down in their quest for their missing groom (Justin Bartha) after their bachelor party goes hilariously awry.

Taking Woodstock

Director: Ang Lee

EXTREMELY TRIVIAL pursuit: Who rented the motel rooms to the guys who did the Woodstock Festival?

Elliot Teichberg, sweetly rendered in Taking Woodstock by comedian Demetri Martin, was that momentous innkeeper of the El Monaco motel. Ang Lee's enshrinement of this fact owes more to his desire to make a comic film after numerous dramas than to any serious pursuit of history.

With no real point to make, Lee and screenwriter James Schamus simply get high from the fumes, offering a character-rich ramble that's more like Robert Altman's Nashville than Michael Wadleigh's Woodstock.

Peter Howell/for Metro Canada

HA		H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	
12/15/09 primetime		31	31	31	ABC	News Center 5	ABC Wld News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	A Charlie Brown Christmas		Scrubs	Better Off Ted	the forgotten
		7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea "Evelyn"		Degrassi: TNG	TMZ (N)	*Lies My Mother Told Me* (2005, Docudrama), Colm Feore				Atlantis
		11	11	11	CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Xmas Carol	Frosty Returns	Legend of Frosty		CBC News: The National		The Hour
		2	2	2	CBC-F	Pyramide (SC)	Union-force	Martin sur la route (N) (SC)		15 ans de Petite Vie (N) (SC)		Le Grand Rire 2009 (N) (SC)		Le Téléjournal
		32	32	32	CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	NCIS "Faith" (HDTV) (N)		NCIS: Los Angeles (N)		The Good Wife
		69	69	69	CFTM	TVA nouvelles	Le Cercle (SC)	Qui perd gagne pour Noël		*Et si c'était vrai* ★★ (2005, Com. Sentimentale), Donal Logue				TVA nouvelles
		6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	The Good Wife (N)		NCIS "Faith" (HDTV) (N)		Gordon Ramsay: Cook		News Final (N)
		9	9	9	CJCH	etalk	Access H.	So You Think You Can Dance		Flashpoint		Flashpoint		CTV News
		10	10	10	ELTV	(6) EastLink Television				Podium TV		Community Matters		
		36	36	36	FOX	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	So You Think You Can Dance		Gordon Ramsay: Cook		Fox First
		12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access H.	Extra (N)	The Sing-Off Two groups leave. (N)				Jay Leno Show
		29	29	29	NW	(6) Power & Politics		Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		fifth estate
		4	4	4	PBS-B	PBS NewsHour (N)		Greater Boston	La Plaza-Maria	Nova "The Bible's Buried Secrets" (DVS)				Look-Lincoln
		35	35	35	PBS-D	PBS NewsHour (N)		Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Motor City Memories		(10:15) To Be Announced		
		68	68	68	TQS	Guerre clans	Popcorn TV (N)	Touche pas à mon fils		Dirty Sexy Money (SC)		Pratique privée (N) (SC)		Guerre clans
news		23	96	96	BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call Tonight		The Close	Market Call	Squeeze Play		Business News
		18	18	18	CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		CNN Tonight (N)		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Cooper 360
sports		54	54	54	GOLF	Golf Central	Top 10	Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)		Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)		Big Break Disney Golf (N)		Big Break
		52	52	52	RSE	Connected W-Prime Time		Best Damn Top 50 Special		Salt Lake	MMA Conn	Olympics: Away From Home		Sportsnet Con.
		55	55	55	SCOR	WWE Monday Night RAW		Cabby Unlimit	Score Today	Court Surfing NBA news, scores and highlights.				
		45	45	45	SPD	Unique Whips		Pass Time	Pass Time	Monster Jam (HDTV)		Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Drives
		53	53	53	TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	That's Hockey!	NBA Basketball Toronto Raptors at Miami Heat. (HDTV) (Live)					Wm. Hockey
family		43	43	43	FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
		44	44	44	TOON	Jimmy Two	Johnny Test	Scooby-Doo	Total Drama	Total Drama	6TEEN	Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad
		26	26	26	TREE	Bob-Bldr	Wonder Pets	Backyardigans	Guess Jess	Night Garden	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Babar
		27	27	27	YTV	Christmas That Almost		OddParents	Flintstone Xms	Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	8 Simple Rules	What I Like	Family Biz
cable variety		16	16	16	A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Psychic Kids: Paranormal		Paranormal
		70	70	70	APTN	APTN National News (N)		Fish Out	Mixed Blessing	Cashing In	Rabbit Fall	Blackfly	Moose TV	Rez Rides
		50	50	50	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live (N)				*Beauty Shop* ★★ (2005, Comedy) Queen Latifah.				Monica: Still
		37	37	37	BRVO	Wind at My Back		Quartet Plus Four at Christmas		Christmas at the Concert Hall		Johnny Cash Christmas		Cash
		25	25	25	CMT	CMT Star Crossed		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Reba	Reba	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Improve.
		49	49	49	COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Jeff Dunham
		153	153	153	COURT	Killer Next Door		True Crime Authors		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Psychic Witness		True Crime
		38	38	38	DISC	Destroyed	Destroyed	Daily Planet (N)		How It's Made	How It's Made	Destroyed	Destroyed	Time Warp (N)
		48	48	48	HGTV	Extreme Makeover: Home		House Hunters	Property Virgin	HGTV's Top 10	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Genevieve	House Hunters
		46	46	46	HIST	Ultimate Engineering		Ancient Discoveries		Cities of the Underworld		Cities of the Underworld		Engineering
		17	17	17	MM	Secret Life of American Teen		Year of Teen Power		The Vampire Diaries		The Vampire Diaries		*American Mall*
		19	19	19	MMM	mmtop10.ca		The Daily Fix		Ranked!		I Want to Work for Diddy		Entourage
		201	201	201	M1	*Hellboy II: The Golden Army*		(7:50) *Web of Lies* (2009, Suspense)			*Watchmen*	*Wanted* ★★★ (2008, Action)		
		48	23	23	OLN	Mantracker		Ghost Hunters International		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
		51	51	51	PEACH	The Office	Name Is Earl	Family Guy	Family Guy	House-Payne	House-Payne	Law & Order: SVU		*Runaway Bride*
		206	206	206	PIX	(6) *Eye for an Eye*		*Two Solitudes* ★★ (1978, Drama) Stacy Keach.				*Mickey Blue Eyes* ★★ (1999)		
		67	67	67	RDI	RDI monde	RDI économie	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI économie
		39	39	39	SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	The Outer Limits		*A Woman's Rage* (2008, Suspense) Brandy Ledford.				Bones
		40	40	40	SLICE	Skin Deep	Skin Deep	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Bulging Brides
		47	47	47	SPACE	Stargate SG-1		Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Star Trek: Voyager		Medium (HDTV) (N)		Fringe
		14	14	14	SPIKE	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		UFC Fight Night						Shocking
		98	98	98	STAR	etalk	TMZ (N)	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		The View (HDTV) (N)		Dr. Oz Show
		21	21	21	TLC	Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	Crazy Christmas Lights		Table for 12	Table for 12	Kids-Counting	18 Kids-Count	Little Couple
		34	34	34	TROP	Prod. Parker	Prod. Parker	'70s Show	'70s Show	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	Switch	Family Guy
		20	20	20	TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	Zoom animal		*Figaro* (2008, Drame) Isabelle Adjani.			Cadeau	Avenirs
		28	28	28	V	Mysterious Ways		Murder, She Wrote		Hallelujah	Dinnerladies	*The Christmas Wish* ★★ (1998, Drama)		
		97	97	97	VIVA	Da Vinci's Inquest		Cold Case		Missing		The Closer (Part 2 of 2)		Cold Case
		22	22	22	W	Grocery Bag	Maxed Out	*Holiday Wishes* (2006, Drama) Amber Benson.				*Eve's Christmas* (2004, Comedy-Drama)		
		251	251	251	WGN	WGN Evening News		Two/Half Men	Family Guy	NBA Basketball Los Angeles Lakers at Chicago Bulls. (HDTV) (Live)				

critics' corner

Gordon Ramsay: Cookalong Live
Known as much for his fiery temper as his culinary skills, the famed chef shows a decidedly friendlier side in this one-hour special as he provides step-by-step instructions for cooking a three-course meal. On the menu: angel hair pasta with shrimp, chili peppers and tomatoes; steak Diane with sauteed potatoes and peas; and a quick tiramisu for dessert. 10 PM on CIHF, FOX



Psychic Kids: Children of the Paranormal
Your kid comes up to you with an unsettling announcement: He sees dead people. What do you do? This series revolving around kids with apparent psychic abilities opens a new season with "Vanished," in which teenagers Travis and Vicki team up with a private investigator to try to shed new light on a missing-person case. 10 PM on A&E

The Christmas Wish
When a young man returns to his hometown to revitalize his deceased grandfather's business, he gets an unusual request from his grandmother: Find out the identity of Lillian, the mysterious woman mentioned in her late husband's journals. His search leads him to a new knowledge of himself — and his family. Neil Patrick Harris and Debbie Reynolds star in this 1998 drama. 10 PM on V

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9 Aleesia - Bubble Gum
8 Jason Derulo - In My Head
7 IYAZ - Replay
6 Hedley - Don't Talk To Strangers
5 David Guetta Ft Akon - Sexy Chick
4 Down With Webster - Rich Girl$
3 Beyonce Ft Lady Gaga - Video Phone
2 Lady Gaga - Bad Romance
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Thurman ends engagement

Uma Thurman ended her engagement because her ex-fiance was too controlling. The actress reportedly split from French financier Arpad Busson because she was tired of him trying to take over her life and telling her what to do, femalefirst.co.uk reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Robbie Williams rebounds

British pop star overcomes addiction and finds happiness

TALIA SOGHOMONIAN
Metro World News

Robbie Williams became an international star as 20 per cent of boy band Take That.

But fame and fortune brought with them his well-documented personal traumas and substance abuse.

Two stints in rehab and a move to the U.S. later, and the 35-year-old singer now seems to be stable and happy in Los Angeles. With a new album Reality Killed the Video Star in stores — and the media getting over-excited about whether he has asked girlfriend Ayda Field to marry him — things have rarely looked better for Robbie.

Q You were away for three years — how's the comeback?

A It actually feels a bit strange that it is a comeback. Shakira just took four years off between records; U2 took five years off; So in relative terms, it really isn't that long. But people and the tabloids and the media seem to have scripted it as such. And how do I feel? Well a lot has been said and written in my absence, going to rehab and various tittle-tattle about my life and where my career is going so I was nervous to see the public reaction to me and my records. It was nerve-wracking and I'm only just settling back into the work.

Q Your album is a hit, so you must be relieved?

A The fans got a bit confused when I put out Rudebox. It scared the majority of them. I'm just happy that this album has given them what they wanted from me.

Q Because Rudebox was more experimental?

A It's only when you put out an album like Rudebox that you realize that you're not the kind of artist who can be experimental and have a bit of a laugh. You realize that you are part of a massive machine whose wheels can come off very easily with one wrong move.

Q Does all that expectation put even more pressure on you?

A Yes, because at home the great British press have kind of got their knives out for me. Everybody's willing for me to fail because that's what they do over there!

Q What is the biggest misconception about Robbie Williams?

A I don't really know what the biggest misconception is about me, there's quite a few out there! I'm terrified of the British press. I've moved countries to get away from them!

Q How is the move to L.A.?

A It's good. It's sunny most of the time and living is laid-back. To wake up in the sun every morning just makes everything better.

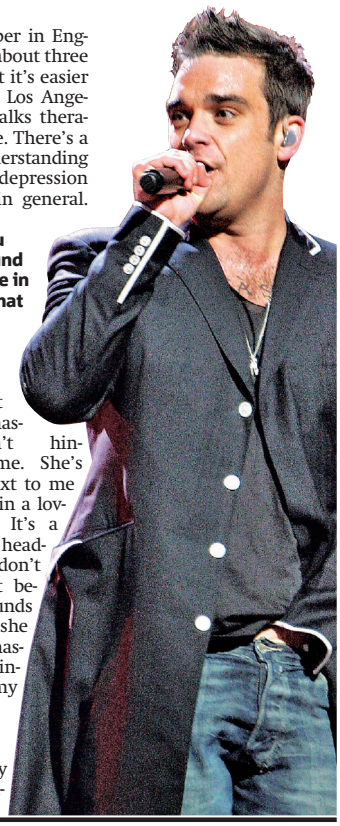
Q Did living in California help you battle your demons, away from the British press?

A I was sober in England for about three years. But it's easier to stay sober in Los Angeles, everybody talks therapy talk out there. There's a much better understanding of addiction, depression and ailments in general.

Q You found love in L.A. — did that help?

A It hasn't hindered me. She's right next to me right now in a loving caress. It's a perfect headline and I don't to say that because it sounds trite, but she certainly hasn't hindered my recovery process and my mental stability. She's wonderful!

Robbie Williams' overcame his addiction following two stints in rehab. His album Reality Killed the Video Star is out now.



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Oscar extends noms to 10 films

HOLLYWOOD Academy Awards organizers have shaken up their show by doubling the best-picture category to 10 nominees in hopes of a broader range of films, mainstream movies mixing with the sober dramas that Oscar voters often favour.

The upside: If crowd-pleasers such as Up and Star Trek make the cut, it could give audiences more reason to watch the Oscars, whose ho-hum TV ratings often climb in years when blockbusters are in the running.

The downside: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences could end up nominating 10 boring movies instead of the usual five, giving fans no new incentive to tune in to a show where rich and famous people spend a long evening patting the backs of other rich and famous people.



The cast of Star Trek, a possible contender for Best Picture at the upcoming Academy Awards.

"The Academy Awards are very important to the industry because they're a commercial for the business. Every year, they're watched worldwide," said Andrew Kosove, a new academy member and a producer on The Blind Side, the sports-themed drama that's become a surprise box-office smash and has caught some best-picture buzz.

"If all the nominees are films that are artistically wonderful but commercially obscure, what happens is the interest in the show has dissipated, and that's bad for the business."

Having 10 best-picture nominees is not unprecedented. The Golden Globes, whose nominations come out Tuesday, have 10 or more best-picture nominees each year, divided into two categories: best drama and best musical or comedy.

From 1931 to 1943, there usually were 10 and some years as many as 12 nominees for best picture at the Oscars.

In 1944, Academy overseers dropped the best-picture field to five, where it had been ever since until now.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nanny returns for parenting mayhem

BOOKS Seven years ago, the best-selling novel The Nanny Diaries introduced us to Nan Hutchinson, an intelligent and compassionate nanny.

Through her eyes, readers watched wealthy New Yorkers focus on their social lives and neglect the emotional needs of their children — including little Grayer, the son of Nan's employers, Mr. and Mrs. X.

Now (in fictional story time) it's 2008, a decade later. Nan is 33, married and building a business as a consultant. Her nanny days would seem to be long behind her. But fate sweeps her back into the lives of Mr. and Mrs. X and to Grayer, now a surly teenager who follows family tradition by treating her like dirt.

So we begin Nanny Returns. And the toxic parenting mess Nan encounters looks a lot like the one she left.

It takes only four pages for the first outrage to pop up, as a rich blond mom rushes toward her delighted toddler on the street, only to drop her shopping bags with relief on the kid's stroller and keep on walking as her shocked child wails.

It gets worse, as we meet the parents at the pricey private school Nan comes to work for. And even Nan's girlhood friends from her private-school past, now well-off young mothers, behave no better. To the grown-ups in this world, children seem to be little more than annoyances. And don't get them started on nannies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Actor needs kidney transplant

Grizzwald Chapman, known to most as Tracy Morgan's sidekick on NBC's 30 Rock, is in dire need of a kidney transplant, the actor has revealed during a taping of The Dr. Oz Show. POPEATER.COM

Pushing boundaries

'I'm going to make all my movies in 3-D:' Cameron

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

Nearly 15 years after he originally conceived of the project and after more than four years of development, James Cameron finally brings his epic Avatar to the screen. The film explores an alien culture through the eyes of Jake (Sam Worthington), a marine who falls in love with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana), one of the natives on the alien planet Pandora. We caught up with Cameron in London to discuss the massive undertaking that is Avatar, pushing the boundaries of 3-D technology and a possible sequel.



Q How important was it to push the boundaries of 3-D filmmaking with this project?

A Up until now, every filmmaker who's made a 3-D film has really felt it incumbent upon themselves to constantly remind you that you're watching a 3-D movie. It's usually things that are floating or poking out of the screen. If I'm constantly reminding you that you're watching a 3-D movie, then you're constantly sitting there reminded that you're in a movie theatre.

So we approached the 3-D as if it were a window, or a portal into a reality. We didn't look for opportunities to constantly exercise our 3-D muscle in front of you. Maybe one thing that Avatar can achieve is to become an example of a mature use of stereoscopic 3-D.

Let it move out of its adolescence into a mature acceptance as just part of the cinematic art by serious filmmakers. I don't have a problem with that. I'm going to make all my movies in 3-D, no matter what the subject matter.

Q But Avatar is also being released in 2-D.

A We try not to make the film a 3-D film first. With some 3-D movies, you watch them in 2-D and there's a shot of a spear sticking out of the screen that they hold on for 10 seconds.

It's all sorts of fun in 3-D, but in 2-D it looks like the stupidest edit in the world. So we wanted to make sure we weren't doing that sort of thing. We're very proud of the 2-D version of the film we've put out. But it really comes down to consumer choice. I think of the 3-D as the premium experience of the film and the 2-D as the excellent base-level presentation of the film.

Q At the same time, there are strong environmental and political messages in the film. How did you work those in?

A I think it's less an intellectual message and more something you feel emotionally. I wanted people to feel the environmental message, not think about it, not have it droning on as information.

It's kind of the exact opposite of An Inconvenient Truth, with the bar graphs and all that. In an adventure film, it's more important to get these concepts viscerally. Historically, the kind of science fiction that I grew up on had a message. Usually it was a dystopian message, usually it was in the form of some kind of warning. And as much as I loved Star Wars, it was a moment in history when science fiction became more escapist fantasy and less a kind of intellectual medium. Avatar is an attempt to merge science fiction back to its roots of having a warning.



More than four years in making, James Cameron's Avatar promises to combine the best of technology and storytelling.

Avatar opens in theatres on Friday

Q The Na'vi language is very complex. How was it developed?

A It started off innocently enough as I was writing the script. I was just sort of free-associating. And when I found Dr. Paul Frommer, who is the head of the linguistics department at USC in Los Angeles, he started to riff on that. He wanted to find things that the actors could still pronounce, but which would sound a little bit alien to our ear — at least in terms of European-based cultures. So he went to Indonesian sounds and bushmen clicks, things like that.

Q Is there going to be a sequel?

A I have it mapped out ... It all depends on whether we do well with the first film. But that was certainly the intention from the beginning. When I pitched this... I said, "You know, we're going to have spend a lot of money and time and energy. So it really makes sense to think of it as the potential start of a franchise." We used to joke that we'd cut to 10 years later, and Jake's kind of fat, sitting on the couch in a palm tree, and he's like, "Hey, honey, get me a beer." And Neytiri says, "Get your own beer!"

MTV finds Teen Wolf actors
MTV has cast four actors in its upcoming Teen Wolf series, a re-imagining of the 1985 movie starring Michael J. Fox: Tyler Posey, Tyler Hoechlin, Crystal Reed and Dylan O'Brien will appear in the new version. EW.COM

In hip hop, Drake's best we ever had

Toronto rapper's got massive buzz


CHRIS PIZZELLO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto hip-hop artists Drake has had made a dizzying ascent in the rap world — and he's done it without having released a proper album.

On his hit single Best I Ever Had, Canadian rapper Drake bragged that he had "buzz so big, I could probably sell a blank disc."

And in a way, he has done just that.

The Toronto hip-hop star has had made a dizzying ascent in the rap world — and he's done it without having released a proper album.

He has three top 20 singles in the U.S. and two Grammy nominations, he's collaborated with Jay-Z, Kanye West and Eminem, and he even had to shoot down rumours of a relationship with Barbadian pop star Rihanna (poor guy).

In a matter of months, he's become one of Canada's most prominent hip-hop exports ever, and one question remains: How did the former Degrassi star go from the cosy environs of Toronto's wealthy Forest Hill enclave to hanging around with Lil Wayne?

"You know what, I'll tell you honestly: it's the hustle and the drive," Toronto hip-hop artist Kardinal Offishall told The Canadian Press in a recent interview.

"I've seen Drake from a few years ago to where he's at now. It's not just because Lil Wayne picked him up or because he had an Internet buzz. I've seen him literally give it everything that he had, 150,000 per cent, in order to make it."

And make it he has.

Born Aubrey Drake Graham in Memphis to a black father and a white Jewish mother, Drake moved to Toronto as a child after his parents divorced.

He got his big break in 2001 at the age of 14 when he was cast on Degrassi: The Next Generation as Jimmy Brooks, a high-school basketball star who eventually surrenders his hoop dreams after being shot in the back, leaving him confined to a wheelchair.

In 2006, Drake self-published his first mixtape, Room for Improvement. That led to Replacement Girl, his collaboration with Virginia R&B croon-

"It's the hustle and the drive. It's not just because Lil Wayne picked him up or because he had an Internet buzz. I've seen him literally give it everything that he had, 150,000 per cent, in order to make it."
Kardinal Offishall

er Trey Songz that was the lead single on Drake's 2007 mixtape, Comeback Season, and which caught the attention of New Orleans rapper Lil Wayne.

Soon, Drake was tucked under Weezy's wing, riding shotgun with a rapper on the cusp of superduperstardom.

In 2008, Lil Wayne's Tha Carter III went platinum in a week and went on to sell more copies than any other album that year. In September '08, the rapper stepped onstage at the MTV Video Music Awards for a collaboration with Leona Lewis and T-Pain.

Shirtless and behind heavy dark shades, Lil Wayne crept down a staircase and rapped a verse that actually wasn't his. Lines like "I'm losing my mind like: 'Damn where my roof just go?' Top slipped off like Janet at the Super Bowl" actually belonged to Drake, then still a mostly unknown MC.

And when Lewis launched into the song's hook (from Nina Simone's Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood), Lil Wayne gave credit where it was due, rasping overtop: "Drizzy Drake, I love you boy!"

A few months after that high-profile endorsement, Drake dropped his next mixtape, So Far Gone, to almost unprecedented buzz for an emerging artist.

Drake was Weezy's protege and showed the influence of Wayne's mischievous, meticulous rhymes. But he arguably owed more to Kanye West, with his exploration of the space between swagger and self-criticism and his unfailing ear for melody.

The mixtape's swooning single Best I Ever Had was a perfect showcase, with Drake crooning the ballad's hook and rapping its intermittently sweet lyrics ("Sweat pants, hair tied, chillin' with no makeup on/ That's when you're the prettiest, I hope that you don't take it wrong").

The song went to No. 2 on the U.S. charts. Drake, still without a record label or official album, became the target of a major-label bidding war (Lil Wayne's Cash Money Records, under the Universal umbrella, ultimately won).

Drake began crafting his album debut, Thank Me Later, scheduled for the first quarter of 2010.

Meantime, his songs continued to get major airplay on both sides of the border. "Drake knows how to write records that are about big ideas," Washington rapper Wale.

"Look at the names of his songs: Fear, Forever, Winner. Those are big ideas."

Toronto-raised hip-hop artist K'naan was more blunt: "He's very good." THE CANADIAN PRESS





Sags win out over scalpels

Dame Judi Dench feels "too old" for cosmetic surgery. The 75-year-old actress admits she hates getting older but worries she has left it too late to alter her appearance, femalefirst.co.uk reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Lindsay in the Twitter

THINK BEFORE YOU TWEET Lindsay Lohan's habitual Twittering may have brought an early end to her trip to India for aid work and a BBC documentary. "Over 40 children saved so far within one day's work. This is what life is about," Lohan posted to her profile, referring to a raid in New Delhi that that saved children being held captive in workshops. "She did not say she was present at the raid, this is a misinterpretation," a rep for the BBC tells the Daily Telegraph. "She was merely referring to a raid that happened connected to child trafficking." METRO NEWS SERVICES



Jude and Sienna shack up

HERE WE GO AGAIN Jude Law, 36, and Sienna Miller, 27, are moving in together, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The pair — who have rekindled their romance after splitting up in 2006 when the actor had an affair with his children's nanny — are so "in love" they are now looking to buy a new London pad early next year so they can be together all the time.

A source told Britain's The Sun newspaper, "Last week they put the wheels in motion to live together again. They have told staff that they are in love and will be moving back to London in the spring and they will be living together as a couple once again."

The on-and-off couple grew close again recently when they both starred in separate Broadway shows in New York at the same time, Jude appearing in Hamlet and Sienna in Miss Julie.

The pair were recently spotted leaving Law's New York apartment together, sparking rumours of a reconciliation.

They first met on the set of Alfie in 2004.

The source added, "Jude was reluctant at first for anything to happen. But Sienna convinced him that she was still in love with him." METRO NEWS SERVICES



Michelle has her secrets

SHE DOESN'T KISS AND TELL Michelle Rodriguez is tired of having to respond to questions about her sexuality. "If I wanted to tell people what I do … I'd have made a sex video a long time ago," the Avatar star says, who has been rumoured to be lesbian or bisexual according to Showbiz Spy. "Largely, people don't know the whole story about anything. But still they need to put a name on it so they can label it and put it on the side and not dedicate any time to figuring it out. It's laziness." METRO WORLD NEWS



Celebrity tweets

LL Cool J is not a fan of rocking, Demi Moore can't stand the rain, Yoko Ono wants you to start small and Neil Diamond does the holidays big-time.

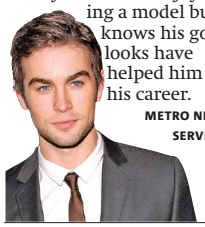
- @llcoolj Do not confuse motion and progress. A rocking horse keeps moving but does not make any progress.
- @mrskutcher Trying to holiday shop in the pouring rain....bah humbug!
- @yokoono Give up meat one day and then two days maybe. It's a very, very intelligent idea.
- @NeilDiamond Sang for the President and Mrs. Obama last night. Terrific. Wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy Chanukah.

METRO WORLD NEWS



Chace's woes

POOR PRETTY BOY Chace Crawford hated being a model, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The Gossip Girl actor says he didn't enjoy being a model but knows his good looks have helped him in his career. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Taylor Swift gives big bucks

BIRTHDAY BONUS SCHOOLS Taylor Swift is no longer a teen. The country superstar marked turning 20 with a Christmas-themed birthday party for friends, her band and her tour crew at her family's home in Hendersonville, Tenn, people.com reports.

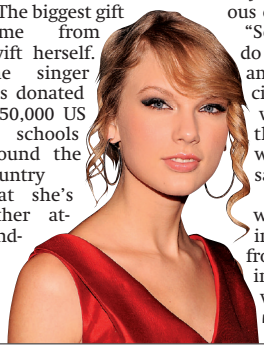
"It's more like an end-of-year Christmas party that happens to be on my birthday," says Swift, who spent the night before at home, baking butter cookies and gingerbread cookies with cream-cheese icing for her guests.

The biggest gift came from Swift herself. The singer has donated $250,000 US to schools around the country that she's either attended or worked with.

The money will pay teachers' salaries as well as buy books and fund various educational programs.

"Something I wanted to do at the end of this amazing year and especially on my birthday was give back to something I really believe in, which is education," says Swift.

"The schools that I went to and the amazing people I got to learn from really turned me into who I am, and I wanted to give back." METRO NEWS SERVICES



Richie goes dark

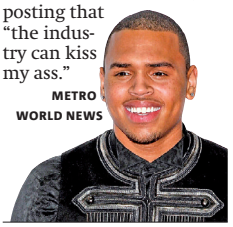
BRUNETTE IS BEST On Saturday, Nicole Richie debuted a darker do, usmagazine.com reports.

"I hadn't done it in about two years," the mother-of-two, 28, told usmagazine.com. "So I was just ready and sick of being blonde." METRO NEWS SERVICES

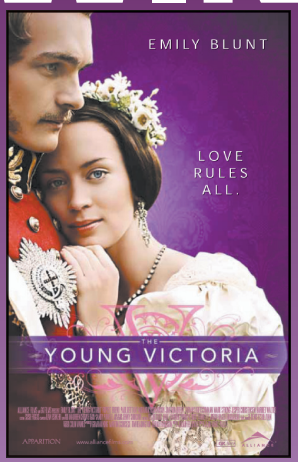


Brown hits back

RETAIL RETALIATION After hearing reports from his Twitter followers that retail managers around the country had been refusing to stock his new album, Chris Brown shot back, posting that "the industry can kiss my ass." METRO WORLD NEWS



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Brand picks up a ring

HE KISSED A GIRL Russell Brand has been shopping for a diamond ring — sparking rumours he is going to propose to girlfriend Katy Perry, people.com reports.

The British comic star was photographed looking at bands at exclusive London jewellers Cartier on Friday with one specific sparkler catching his eye.

A source said, "His face lit up when he saw this one particular diamond ring.

He put it on his ring finger and gazed at it for ages."

Russell, 34, has been dating Katy, 25, since September and it looks as though he is ready to turn his back on his womanizing ways for good and settle down with the I Kissed a Girl singer.

Brand — who is a former heroin addict and alcoholic — said, "She's 'The One.' "I'm a one-woman gentleman now. She's amazing." METRO NEWS SERVICES

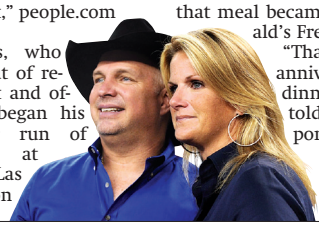


Garth is a such a romantic

I'M LOVIN' IT? As far as anniversaries go, Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood must have to be "lovin' it," people.com reports.

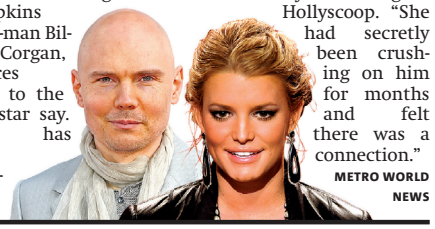
Brooks, who came out of retirement and officially began his five-year run of shows at Wynn Las Vegas on Saturday, had a fancy dinner planned to celebrate his fouth anniversary with Yearwood, but suddenly that meal became McDonald's French fries.

"That was our anniversary dinner," he told reporters. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Jessica has 'fallen for Billy'

ODDEST COUPLE EVER Though she's said to be taking it slow, Jessica Simpson is totally smitten with Smashing Pumpkins front-man Billy Corgan, sources close to the pop star say. "She has completely fallen for Billy and his easygoing, smart attitude. She says she wants to take things a lot further," sources say, according to Hollyscoop. "She had secretly been crushing on him for months and felt there was a connection." METRO WORLD NEWS



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Today
Cloudy
6° / -7°

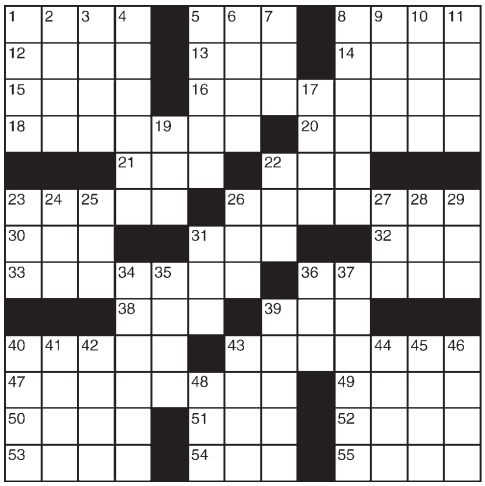
Wednesday
70%
Rain and snow
4° / -11°

Thursday
Partly cloudy
-9° / -10°

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Take Five



ACROSS

1 Initial stake
5 Resort
8 Obama's predecessor
12 — -garou (werewolf)
13 Sept. preceder
14 "Do — others ..."
15 Choir member
16 Pop-up's opposite
18 More healthy
20 Urban disturbances
21 "Of course"
22 21-Across, at the altar
23 Bard's creations
26 Cad
30 Resistance measure
31 Pistol
32 Actress Gardner
33 Sledgehammer, e.g.
36 Red Sea nation
38 Lubricate
39 Swindle
40 Disco-style
43 Creator of a company
47 Flatfish
49 Modern coin
50 Carry on
51 Greek H
52 "— Karenina"
53 Harem rooms
54 Nev. neighbor
55 "Monopoly" card

DOWN

1 "Woe is me!"
2 — contendere
3 Ballerina's frill
4 Namesake of a sort
5 Wise ones
6 Kitten's call
7 Past
8 Toe woe
9 Loosen
10 Cancel a dele
11 — d'oeuvres
17 Asian language
19 — Moines
22 Charged bit
23 Burst
24 Cry of discovery
25 Ostrich's cousin
26 Botanical prickle
27 Hoover, for one
28 First lady
29 Sprinted
31 Come together
34 Reason for a lack of glory?
35 "My Heart Will Go On" singer
36 Second person
37 Group of nine
39 Reef material
40 Frizzy hairstyle
41 Pleased
42 Chaplin widow
43 Crumbly cheese
44 Sand formation
45 Sea eagle
46 Street
48 Calendar abbr.

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

4		3				1		8
	9		1		8		5	
7			5		9			2
		8	3		5	4		
		9	6		4	3		
8			2		7			6
	1		4		6		3	
5		7				8		4

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

B	A	C	H	■	S	A	Y	■	S	C	U	M		
E	U	R	O	■	O	D	E	■	T	A	R	O		
E	R	O	S	■	C	O	L	L	A	R	D	S		
F	A	C	T	O	R	■	P	O	R	O	U	S		
■	■	■	E	R	A	S	■	G	E	L	■	■		
C	O	L	L	A	T	E	D	■	R	I	C	O		
A	N	A	■	L	I	N	E	S	■	N	O	W		
P	E	N	S	■	C	O	L	L	A	G	E	N		
■	■	C	C	I	■	R	I	O	T	■	■	■		
S	H	E	A	R	S	■	V	E	T	O	E	D		
C	O	L	L	A	P	S	E	■	E	R	G	O		
O	B	O	E	■	E	E	R	■	S	C	A	N		
T	O	T	S	■	W	A	Y	■	T	A	N	S		

7	4	3	1	6	5	8	2	9
1	2	6	9	8	4	7	5	3
9	5	8	7	2	3	4	6	1
3	8	9	6	4	2	1	7	5
5	1	4	8	3	7	2	9	6
6	7	2	5	9	1	3	4	8
8	3	5	4	7	6	9	1	2
2	6	7	3	1	9	5	8	4
4	9	1	2	5	8	6	3	7

On the web

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Metro Recipe of the Day



Seafood and Bacon Paella

INGREDIENTS:

2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
7 oz (200 g) bacon, chopped
1 large tomato, chopped
1 1/3 cups (325 ml) paella rice
1/2 tsp (2 ml) saffron threads, crushed
5 cups (1.25 l) hot chicken stock
14 oz (400 g) frozen cooked seafood mix

METHOD:

1. Heat oil in large, nonstick frying pan. Add onion, pepper, garlic and bacon pieces, and cook over gentle heat 5 minutes. Add tomato and cook 2 minutes.
2. Add rice and stir to coat in oil. Add saffron threads and heat for a few seconds, then pour in hot stock. Bring to boil, then stir lightly and simmer 5 minutes.
3. Mix in frozen seafood, return to gentle simmer and cook until rice is tender and liquid absorbed, stirring occasionally. Serve.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**


Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Ignore your critics and do what you think is best. It might be an idea in future to keep your plans to yourself so others don't get the chance to poke their noses in.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
The Sun in Sagittarius at this time of year tends to make you anxious but if you think about it you will realize you've got precious little to worry about.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
You may think you know all there is to know about someone you love but they will do something today that makes you realize you don't know it all.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
The Sun may be transiting the work area of your chart at the moment but you don't have to do everything yourself.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
You won't lack for confidence today but what about common sense? If you take foolish risks no amount of confidence will save you.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Minor disagreements could easily get out of hand today, so promise yourself now that no matter what anyone says to you you won't rise to the bait.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
There is no point blaming other people if something does not go right for you. Look at your own performance first and resist the urge to pass the buck.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Don't waste money on things you don't really need. Something may be bright and shiny and catch your fancy today but what good would it do you?

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Your energy levels may be high but you seem unable to decide what you should be doing with it all. But who says you have to do anything?

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
You may be rather fearful at the moment but it won't be long before you are feeling better.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Sometimes it pays to be blunt and this may be one of those times. Others won't mind your forthright language so long as they understand it.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Keep a cool head today because something is going to happen that has others running around like it's the end of the world.

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This day in history

1939: Gone with the Wind received its premiere at Loew's Grand Theater in Atlanta, Ga., USA.
1978: President Jimmy Carter announces that the United States will recognize the People's Republic of China and cut off all relations with Taiwan.
1997: The Treaty of Bangkok is signed allowing the transformation of Southeast Asia into a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.
2001: The Leaning Tower of Pisa reopens after 11 years and $27,000,000 US to fortify it, without fixing its famous lean.
2005: Argentina's president Néstor Kirchner announces the early repayment of its external debt to the IMF.

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Price based on Mon. – Fri. departures

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Feb. 8 • 1 wk.
$1189
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $266

Punta Cana
Gran Bahia Principe Punta Cana • 5★
All-Inclusive • Junior suite
Mar. 6 • 1 wk.
$1739
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $297

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+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $213

Iberostar Rose Hall Beach • 4 1/2★
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Feb. 8, 15 & 22 • 1 wk.
$1539
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $266

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